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SOUTHENNAN

BY JOHN GALT, ESQ.

AUTHOR OF

"LAWRIE TODD," "THE ANNALS OF THE PARISH,"

&c. &c.

"When royal Mary, blithe of mood,
Kept holiday in Holyrood."

Hogg.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

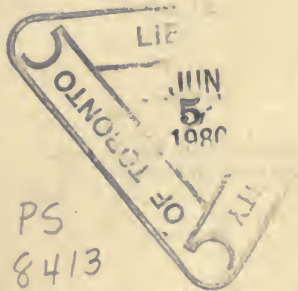
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SOUTHENNAN.

CHAPTER I.

" I take thy taunt as part of thy distemper,
And would not feel as thou dost, for more shekels
Than all our father's herds would bring, if weighed
Against the metal of the sons of Cain."

BYRON.

THE trial of Chatelard was soon over. He was found guilty, and ordered for execution. Although this sentence was universally expected, there were many, like the Earl of Morton, who thought it too severe; and, in consequence, down to the evening before it was to be carried into effect, the Queen was beset with many petitions to remit it to banishment. But in this the inflexibility, or obstinacy, of her race

prevailed, and she at last would listen to no representation on the subject.

Had she been more austere in her character, this determination would have been entitled to the epithet of firmness; but being occasionally heady, and fluctuating, it appeared to those, who knew her best, to partake of caprice; still it was one of the most conscientious instances of the elevation, with which she could on trying occasions sustain her dignity.

Over the grief of Adelaide we shall draw the curtain. Her father and Southennan were unremitting in their kindness to Chatelard; but no one felt so much for him as Rizzio, whose remorse grew sharper as the time of the execution drew nearer and nearer. He was conscious of deserving the reproaches of the prisoner, but his contrition overcame his policy; and he resolved, whatever his reception might be, to visit him in the Castle. Accordingly, having obtained the necessary order, he proceeded at a late hour on the night previous to the execution, to the Castle. Knockwhinnie and Southennan, who knew of his intention, offered to

accompany him, but he was too well aware that he was incurring some hazard of being reproached, to accept their company.

As he walked up the High-street, every thing seemed unusually still. His emotion encreased as he ascended, insomuch, that by the time he had reached the Castle-hill, he was profoundly sorrowful. Seeing a number of carpenters at work on the esplanade with lanterns and torches, he inquired as he passed what they were erecting there, for he knew not that the Castle-hill was the place of execution for state-criminals: when they replied that it was a scaffold for Chatelard, he could with difficulty prevent himself from sinking. His emotion, indeed, became so violent, that he was obliged to rest on a low parapet-wall, which in those days ran along part of the northern side of the esplanade.

While resting there, a gloomy train of conjectural anticipations, in their effect prophetic, filled his mind; he thought of his own condition—a stranger—and, he suspected, friendless in the country; holding an office, it was true, of trust and honour, but at the will of a fickle

woman, and a still more variable council; and who, for small offences, were prone to indulge in sudden and summary vengeance. All nature seemed to be in unison with his darkened reflections. The heavens were overcast — the North Loch, which lay beneath him, seemed, in the dimness of the night, like a pall of blackness. All objects around suggested funereal images,—the distant sea could not be seen, but its murmurs rose, through the silence of the dull air, with a low and querulous sound, that awakened dismal associations, as if Time were undermining the foundation and frame of things. Nothing was distinct to his eye, nor intelligible to his ear; he had only a vague impression of noises and sounds, and a dreary monotonous confusion.

In this comfortless state and mood he was several times on the point of returning to Holyrood House without entering the Castle; but as often as he was so inclined, a vivid picture of the condemned prisoner, forlorn in his cell, rose before him, amidst wild fancies of chains and mouldy vaults, and racks, and other direful implements of painful death.

Several times the dreadful vision went and came, till it had the influence of an impulse upon him, and obliged him to fulfil his intent.

He was admitted through the postern of the Castle-gate, and one of the guards conducted him to the tower in which Chatelard lay, where a little occurrence detained him for some time, before he could get admittance. The gaoler was at his supper, and begged he might be allowed to finish it, as his wife, who had brought it up from the city, was anxious to return home.

Rizzio looked in at the door of the low grim vault, where the old man was sitting at the side of a large fire, eating his coarse but plentiful meal from a bench, on the end of which his wife was seated, holding a black iron lamp with rush wicks, to give him light, the fire having been covered up for the night.

It seemed to Rizzio that he had never seen a more hideous place. Various pieces of rusty armour and weapons hung on the walls. In one corner stood an engine, of which he could

only shudder at the use; and he observed a huge instrument, resembling a pair of shears: for what purpose it was ever employed he feared even to think.

The light of the lamp being insufficient, the hagbutter, who came with him, went to the rack in the corner, and taking out of its windlass one of the iron hand-spikes, broke the coal into splinters on the fire, and presently a ruddy blaze illuminated all the room, and brought other horrid engines and weapons into view.

For a few minutes after the first shock at the sight of the dreadful things around, Rizzio stood in a kind of torpor, overwhelmed with dread and remorse.

The old man, having finished his supper, lighted him up a narrow damp stair with the lamp his stalwart wife had been holding, and turning the key, admitted him to Chatelard, who was lying stretched on the settle, which occupied nearly one side of the room. On the table stood a light in an old and curiously-fashioned brazen candlestick, as black as bronze with verdigris and negligence.

The old man, as soon as he had admitted him, retired, reminding him that he could not be allowed to remain long, as the gates would be soon shut for the night.

Chatelard, although he had thrown his eyes towards his visitor, yet did not appear at once to recognise him, for the wick of his own candle was high, and the air of the room, from a mist, in which the Castle was then involved, was dense and obscure.

When Rizzio approached he started up, and abruptly demanded for what purpose he had come; but in the moment, seeing in his hand the written order by which he had obtained admission, he exclaimed,

“Ha! then she has at last relented. Is it a pardon, or but a respite?”

Rizzio, affected by the wild look and voice with which the prisoner addressed him, was unable for some time to reply, and when he did say that it was neither respite nor pardon, his voice was tremulous and pathetic.

“Then why have you come here?” cried Chatelard; “What evil have I ever done you,



that your insidious suggestions should have brought me to this place?"

To this, a reply in the frame of Rizzio's mind was not easy. His heart was full, and his mind was pitched to a tone of enthusiasm; but when Chatelard, convulsed with grief and indignation, began to reproach him, that romantic momentary generosity was dissipated; and the stinging reproaches with which he was assailed provoked his anger. Still, though his eyes flashed and his lips quivered, his voice scarcely underwent any change.

To the maledictions of the Frenchman, he returned cool and bitter taunts; scoffing at his vanity, and deriding his ambition. The altercation continued to increase in energy with Chatelard, until his agitation rose to frenzy; while Rizzio appeared as if that violence only served to make him concentrate his self-possession, and to barb his sarcasms with harsher acrimony.

"Taunt me no more!" cried Chatelard; "leave me! let me make my peace with Heaven! Surely thou wouldst not that I did less! Go, Rizzio! and when you recollect my vanity

and my ambition, remember your own. I must fall on the scaffold! When your own time comes, you will then think of me! When the dagger of some other injured, or some contemptuous noble, provoked by your pride, deals your doom—a dog's death—you will remember this night! Go! I see gouts of blood already on thy vest! Fated man! depart! leave me!”

Rizzio could not withstand the hollow and superstitious voice in which this prediction was delivered. He turned round hastily, and beheld behind him a tall figure wrapped as it were in a shroud.

“Your time is come!” said the gaoler: for it was the old man come to apprise him that the Castle-gates must be shut for the night.

CHAPTER II.

“What a strange thing is circumstance!”

LORD ORFORD.

IN the morning, Knockwhinnie, who was by that time fully apprised of the extent of his daughter's attachment to Chatelard, rose at an early hour, and left the Unicorn to visit her. He justly considered that to her the day would be dismal.

As he walked down the Canongate, he met crowds of persons hastening from Leith and other parts of the country, to witness the tragedy on the Castle-hill; and turning round, he saw a vast multitude pressing upward in the High-street, and that the windows were filled with spectators: still all was calm as the serenity of the sabbath. He had not troubled himself to ascertain at what hour the blow was to be struck:

from the moment he had parted from the prisoner he considered him as dead.

On reaching the Palace, he was immediately conducted to the apartment of Adelaide ; but on entering, it was empty : nor could he learn, either from her maid Annette or any other of the servants, what had become of her.

He sat down in expectation of her return into the room, under a persuasion that she was with the Queen. In this, however, he was speedily undeceived ; for he learnt from the Lady Mary Livingstone, who came in quest of her, that she had not been with her Majesty that morning: an unusual circumstance.

At any other time her absence would not have excited so much interest ; but the event of the day, and the extraordinary depression of her spirits during the preceding evening, caused a considerable degree of anxiety, which would probably have been greater but for the accident of the Count Dufroy being also absent. His absence, however, was purely incidental: he had walked out into the park, and returned while Knockwhinnie was expressing his surprise

to the ladies, that Adelaide should have been in spirits enough to go abroad.

The return of Count Dufroy to the Palace alone, alarmed Knockwhinnie ; and the ladies also were seized with a panic. Servants were dispatched in all directions, and great confusion prevailed in the Palace. This continued until noon, when the return of some of the guards, who had been to see the execution, apprised them that it was over : but still no tidings were heard of Adelaide. Then came Southennan, who, although he had not witnessed the catastrophe, had yet been on the Castle-hill ; led thither by a painful curiosity, which gave way to an anguish of mind that obliged him to take refuge from the horrors of the spectacle in an obscure house, until all was over. Rizzio had likewise been there, and had witnessed the glittering descent of the fatal axe : but no one had heard aught of Adelaide.

Knockwhinnie was indescribably distressed ; he could devise nothing to appease his anxiety : and a frightful apprehension took possession of his mind, that Chatelard was not the only vic-

tim sacrificed that morning: he feared that Adelaide had destroyed herself. Southennan was not without similar terror, and was equally incapable of directing or undertaking any measure which might lead to her discovery.

While they were in this affliction, Southennan was summoned out of the room by one of the Queen's servants.

"Your boy," said the man, "has come in great haste for you; and will tell no one his business, until he sees yourself. Nor would he consent to wait; but insisted, if you could not come out to him, that he should be permitted to come to you."

Southennan knew from this urgency that something of importance had occurred; and his hopes flattered him, that possibly the boy had acquired some information concerning Adelaide: he accordingly went immediately down to the arcade of the Court, where Hughoc instantly joined him.

"Oh, Maister," said the boy, "guess what I hae seen! Knockwhinnie's only dochter; a jimp and lily-like leddy!"

“ Well, what of her ? Where saw you her, and where is she ? ”

“ Ye maunna, Laird, be overly hasty ; but there ’s something brewing yonder that no yill.”

“ Well, speak ! tell me in as few words as possible ! ”

“ Then she ’s in our lodgings ! ”

“ In the house of Mistress Marjory ? ”

“ ’Deed is she ! and she ’s dressed a’ in white ; and most doleful to see, sitting wi’ her face covered wi’ a white veil, the very marrow and fashion o’ a corpse ’s in it’s dead claes : and Mrs. Marjory is in a most extraordinar sorrow, for she gangs up and down the house, bot and ben ; and has, I think, twa towels to kep her tears. And what d’ye think, Laird ! it ’s no to be spoken o’, it ’s a secret that I overheard coming out o’ the keyhole. The body o’ the man that has gotten his head haggit aff, is to be brought to our house, where a’ manner o’ pageantry is getting ready by Baldy and Father Jerome ; and the burial is to be in the Grey-friars kirk-yard, at the dead hour o’ the night.”

This information certainly surprised South-

ennan, who immediately rejoined Knockwhinnie and the Count, who were waiting for his return.

The mystery of Adelaide's absence was soon explained. She had heard incidentally from her father, that Mistress Marjory was related to them, which had induced her to go to the old lady, and request her mediation to recover the remains of Chatelard; for his treason having been without coadjutors, the atrocious part of the punishment was remitted, and the body was allowed the rights of sepulture.

The Count Dufroy appeared much more distressed at hearing this sad instance of her love and grief, than Knockwhinnie. He proposed to go at once to her, and they then proceeded together. On entering, the house appeared as quiet as usual. Mistress Marjory was not visible, nor was there any thing in the manner of Baldy, who admitted them, to attract observation.

To his master's inquiry for Mistress Marjory, he returned a seeming careless answer; but when the Count Dufroy inquired if he had been that morning at the Palace with a message for

Adelaide, he looked confused, and found himself constrained to acknowledge the truth.

Southennan was visibly disturbed at this, and demanded, with a degree of severity he had never used towards this old domestic before,

“What is meant by so many plots, stratagems, and double dealings? I will be trifled with no longer. Mistress Marjory is in the house, and Knockwhinnie’s daughter is also here. Has the body yet arrived?”

Baldy turned his head from side to side in extreme astonishment, and his eye glancing on Hughoc, who was standing in an obscure corner of the lobby in which this little scene took place, the boy instinctively crouched himself down into a heap, and covered his ears with his hands, as if in the terror of an immediate chastisement. Baldy was, however, not permitted to avenge his betrayal, but was peremptorily commanded to announce to the ladies, that Knockwhinnie and the Count Dufroy had heard what was intended, and that they both requested to see them.

Evasion being unavailing, Baldy went and

delivered his message; but instead of admitting the gentleman into the chamber of grief, Mistress Marjory came out to them alone. Her explanation in no essential differed from what the boy had told, and she pled both with pity and entreaty, to permit Adelaide to indulge her mournful fancy.

“The burial,” said she, “is to be this night, and the sooner it’s o’er the sweet mademosle will begin to recover. Oh! it has been a calamitous and unchancy accidence. I wish my house may ever get the better o’ haeing a headless corpse brought to it.”

After some farther discussion, in which it was agreed that Adelaide should be indulged, they went into the chamber where the body was laid out on a table, covered with a sheet. On entering the room Adelaide was seen sitting in a corner veiled, as the boy had described; motionless, but frequently sighing. Opposite to her, on the other side of the apartment, Father Jerome was busy decorating a temporary altar, on which seven candles were standing already lighted; for the room was darkened, and the



whole spectacle was awful and solemn. On looking at the form on the table, Southennan beheld that the head was not there. He, however, took no notice, but hastened his companions out of the room, and inquired as to this affecting circumstance of Baldy, who acknowledged that it had not yet been recovered from the executioner, who insisted, as Baldy said, for an unreasonable largesse for it. While they were thus speaking a rude knocking was heard at the door, and on its being opened, the old gaolor of the state prison came forward with a basket, covered with a sack. He said something in a whisper to Baldy, who immediately took the basket from him, and saying to his master, "It's come now!" he carried it into the mourning chamber, from which a violent shriek in the same instant apprized them that Adelaide was aware of what had been brought.

CHAPTER III.

“ I was last night with all my ancestors ! ”

ANONYMOUS.

ALTHOUGH the Queen had, during the whole of that melancholy day, sustained herself with great steadiness, her heart and judgment were woefully at war, and when informed that the sentence had been carried into effect, her colour fled and she shed tears. Some of the Roman clergy paid her visits, but none, save her confessor, was admitted ; he was long with her, and when he came away, it was observed that he was pale and thoughtful. The Earl of Morton also requested an audience, but was refused ; after him Doctor Glossar also came to offer his spiritual consolations, but his visit was likewise declined, though in less decided terms, and he lingered in the gallery for some time, in expec-

tation that he should still be admitted. The Prior of St. Andrew's also came, and was, on his name being sent in, immediately received.

The Queen, on seeing him enter, requested him, in her mildest manner, to sit beside her.

"Think not, James Stuart," said she, "though you find me thus greatly grieved, that it is from any weak affection for that unfortunate martyr."

"Your Majesty," replied the Prior, "applies a strange title to him!"

"Verily, no! because he has been sacrificed, not for any sin prohibited, but to appease the artificial dæmon of your cruel laws. It is not for him, my kind brother, that I am sorrowful; it is for myself. This has been a woful overture to my proposed marriage. Heaven knows what is to be the fruit of that which has been thus sown with blood! I am haunted with prophetic fears. It was a grim fancy, but I think it was as the axe fell, that I felt as it were its cold edge touch my own neck. Truly, I need solace; but where is it to be found? Oh! wherefore did I ever leave fair France, and all

my happy days, behind; for even before I was sent there I had dismal reminiscences of the stern visages of rude rough men. I do remember while yet a child, a fellow, one of your iron lords, came in, scowling like December, while I was sitting on my mother's lap; and in his right hand he held a dagger stained with blood. I clung in horror to my mother's bosom; and she, sad lady! not in less dread, held her hand over me to avert the blow;—for she thought his treasonable intent was to take my life. But he was there as a protector, and had been assaulted by some adversary even within the Palace. This fell out at Falkland: and that same night I had a fearful dream, which time nor circumstance hath dimmed to my remembrance. Methought a long array of all our royal ancestors came and looked piteously on me, as I lay beside my mother, whom I dreamt was then dead; each and all of them, as they passed sorrowfully by, showed me the blemish of some violent death, which had attended on them all. Often have I shuddered at that dream; and now I begin to understand the vision! Oh, I am as one amidst the spectres

of slaughtered kings; and when I would think of those who of our race were deemed more fortunate, I cannot recall the name of one whose fortunes were not disastrous ! ”

The Prior was melted with compassion and sympathy; he felt as if a sense of some undivulged ancestral curse was upon himself, and he acknowledged, that he had of late received strange intimations by auguries and signs, to which none could give meaning, but which something unblest of a fore-doom in his own mind enabled him to understand.

“ Oh, why is my affection for you so troubled with distrust ? ”

“ Distrust,” exclaimed the Prior, “ what incantation hath raised that fiend; in what other way than by my love and my fidelity, can I more prove myself deserving of your confidence ? ”

“ Alas ! you have changed your God. Can I help fearing, that having dared so much you can remain true to me ? And you have done it corruptly too ; for still you wear that consecrated garb, and yet in all things how zealous are you against our ancient and holy altars ! ”

“Your Majesty’s ear hath been abused, and I can but hope to prove, by the probity of my life, and the purity of my heart, the piety of my change. I can make no professions. Let me be tested, and I shall come brighter from the trial.”

There was some justice in his suspicion, for the Queen’s confessor had tampered with her for the confidence she placed in “the apostate bastard,” as he was commonly called by the papistical party, and had represented to her that the sacrifice of Chatelard was a machination of the Lords of the Congregation to bring her into disrepute with the people, among whom her gentleness and beauty were beginning to acquire their natural influence.

“Believe not,” said she, “that I tell you of this fear in reproach—no, it is said in love and sorrow. I need your help—I need the help of all good men—but I am helpless!”

With that quiet and subdued firmness of character, for which the Prior was, in all the vicissitudes of his life, so eminently distinguished, he softly remonstrated against the superstitious

character she had given to her fancies, and exhorted her to consult only those who advised her to avoid every measure which might sow rancour in any breast.

“ Yet,” cried she, “ how have I been driven to the extremity which has been this day consummated. Oh! I am miserable: my heart confides in you, but reason and religion would almost persuade me to cancel the bond ! ”

Perceiving that, in the passion of her thoughts, expostulation would be of no avail, he retired, hoping that, in the society of her ladies, she might find some pastime to alleviate her forebodings. But the event which had recalled the omens of her early years, was too awful to be resisted. The instrument was out of tune, the strings jangled in discord, and she remained secluded for the day; agitated, and often trembling with alarm at the phantoms she invoked herself.

As the evening declined her fearfulness increased. Her imagination darkened with the fading twilight, and she thought the clouded heavens, as she looked from her casement, were

traced with incomprehensible prodigies. It was, indeed, one of those nights when the heavens, to the ordinary eye, exhibit no intelligible phenomenon; but to the doomed, who have the sense of destiny upon them, appear written all over with intimations as dismal as the lurid sentence of the Babylonian King.

CHAPTER IV.

“ For close designs and crooked councils fit,
Sagacious, bold, and turbulent of wit.”

DRYDEN.

BUT whatever was the distressful state of the Queen's mind, it was enviable compared to that of Rizzio. He had returned from witnessing the fate of his friend, whom his advice, covertly given to promote his own interest, had brought to the scaffold. He was intrusted with the management of a delicate matter of State, the intimation of her Majesty's intention to marry again; but in which he had discovered, by what the Earl of Morton had said to himself, that little faith was reposed in his integrity. Remorse, indignity suffered, and hungry ambition, were scorpions in his bosom.

Sometimes he reasoned with himself, to appease the upbraidings of his conscience, that the weakness of Chatelard was alone to blame; but still there was a lurking, secret, self-conviction, that he had interestedly contributed to his ruin: it gnawed his heart with the anguish of the worm that never dies. At others, he was afflicted with the certainty of being held in no right esteem. He knew his own superiority in accomplishments and qualities; nor was his comparative estimate of himself diminished, even while tingling with the humiliating experience of being undervalued; a feeling, the deepest and the keenest to which the human breast can be exposed without guilt.

Cogitating of these things, and especially of the Earl of Morton's sarcasm, he exclaimed—"Yes, it shall be so, my lord; if I can, I will find a patron in the husband of the Queen—he will be your master and my tool. What is my inherited blemish, that the boors and bandits of this bleak and inhospitable land dare to treat me with such contumely!"

At this moment the recollection of Chatelard's

prediction, glared like a ghost across his mind, and scared the phantoms of ambition.

“But it is an unequal fight,” he added, disconsolately, “an individual against a host—a stranger, a defenceless stranger, against a banded household—a savage clan—a nation of clans, who deem him criminal—merely because he is a stranger. Yes; my fate is inevitable, whatever prosperity may, in the interim, spread with the loftiest growth over me, a violent death awaits me; would I had never crossed the Alps, but, in the cool cloister of our college, spent all my easy days in patient study! But the end of life is much the same to all; the axe of treason; the secret phial; the assassin’s stroke; disease or accident; or nature tearing down aching old age; all prove that the worth of life lies in the interim, between the cradle and the coffin; but there are fools who babble of fame, and for an unsubstantial blazon, struggle with destiny. And what is fame but an embalmed mummy? itself naught; even whilst exhaling odours.”

This course of reflection soon came to its natural result—a determination to study his own

advancement, and to leave the issues to time ; and thus it happened, that the Prior of St. Andrew's, after his painful interview with the Queen, found him framing instructions for the ministers abroad, as to the sort of character who would be acceptable to the Queen and the nation ; while in his own mind he had determined to find a fitter for his purposes than any of the princes they were likely to recommend.

He exhibited the paper on which he was employed to the Prior, who read it carefully over, pausing at several points, and applauding certain passages distinguished for eloquence and sagacity ; and who, on returning it, sat down beside Rizzio, saying, in a manner, which, though not intended to be in any degree particular, was felt to be significant,

“ Do you think any character is to be found who will suit this description, which I acknowledge is truly what we want ? If so, I cannot but approve, as every one indeed must do, the felicity of your writing ; but if you do not, and have only been ambitious of showing your own talent, then I think it were better to alter the

paper.” And, fixing his eyes steadily on Rizzio, he added, after a brief suspension, “ But, from your well-known acuteness, it may be suspected, by those who entertain invidious opinions of honesty, that you have been in this matter actuated by some sinister motive.”

Rizzio replied with unmoved equanimity, that he always endeavoured to do his best; and he was surprised it should be thought, in so important a matter, he could have any other purpose in view than the plain performance of a most important duty.

“ The rule,” said the Prior, “ is a wise one ; but this despatch is framed with reference to some other object than the purport bears. It lacks the spirit of sincerity. I am critical, not as a member of her Majesty’s Council, but as if I were reading it as a passage in a book. It is well indited, and, for a public document, framed more in the humour of philosophy than in the usage of state writings.”

Rizzio still preserved his countenance, though disconcerted. He was not aware that he had to deal with any such fine penetration, and said,

“I will endeavour to make a new letter, that may wear the appearance of more earnestness; but I cannot make it more sincere.”

“That I believe. How could you, having, so much in mind to which the matter of the letter does not refer?”

“What can I have,” exclaimed the Italian, “but a desire that it may be well thought of? And therefore, in the writing, I may have been more studious of my terms, than had the subject been less likely to obtain special attention.”

“Now,” said the Prior, smiling, “you have given me some reason not to think so well of you as I have hitherto done; for I attributed these well-ordered sentences to your mind being occupied with the fate of the unhappy Chatelard; but since it is not so, I can only wonder with what you were engaged. It must have been something touching your own fortunes.”

“Truly, my Lord, you have guessed curiously. The fate of Chatelard has fearfully admonished me that I stand on the verge of a cliff, and that a little wind may blow me down the steep. I was, therefore, sad with the thought

of being here friendless, having no one to claim the help of in any difficulty."

The Prior felt some regret for what he had said; for he did not mean either sarcasm or insinuation, and was grieved to think he had disturbed a disordered string in the alien's breast; for he could not but acknowledge to himself that the expiation of Chatelard's offence was severe, and calculated to make a deep impression on all who stood equally unfriended, and especially on his successor, in whose circumstances there was a striking similarity.

"I pray you, Rizzio," said he, "to put no more meaning into my words than they express. I but spoke to you lightly; being saddened with the grief in which I have left her Majesty; I may have seemed graver than befitted the occasion. You have a difficult station to maintain: but we have men amongst us who can value worth; and therefore I would say, be as lowly in their eyes as you can, for we are all jealous of overweening, whether it be the pride of talent, the arrogance of birth, or the exultation arising from success of any kind."

Soon after, the Prior went away, leaving Rizio in considerable uneasiness. He had not apprehended that there were any such subtle metaphysicians about the Court, and he was vexed to think that the state of his mind could be so easily detected. The natural effect of the interview was, in consequence, a resolution on his part to be more circumspect; but the resolution was at variance with the promptings of his nature; and no endeavour to act upon it could be uniformly maintained, nor last long.

CHAPTER V.

“ My particular grief
Is of so flood-gate and o’erbearing nature,
That it ingulfs and swallows other sorrows,
And yet is still itself.”

OTHELLO.

IN the meantime, the preparations for the funeral of Chatelard were completed; and Knockwhinnie, with his daughter, together with Southenan, his servants, and Father Jerome, assembled at the house of the sexton of the Grey Friars about half-an-hour before midnight. Soon after, the coffin containing the remains was brought there by Johnnie Gaff, and three other persons whom he had employed for the purpose, and to assist in digging the grave; for the sexton was an old man, lame and paralytical, needing aid in his vocation.

The night being cloudy, and the wind gusty, the mourners remained in the sexton's house until the grave was prepared; while Southennan's servants, each carrying a lantern, accompanied the sexton and his assistant to the spot of sepulture. The silence of the night, broken only by an occasional hollow sweep of the wind, was of itself fearfully calculated to awaken gloomy reflections; but the business was so absorbing, that it alone interested the thoughts and feelings of those engaged in it.

The grave was dug without even a whisper; and when it was finished, the boy informed the mourners. Two ropes being fastened to the coffin, the ends of one of them were taken by Knockwhinnie and Southennan, and those of the other by Johnnie Gaff and one of the labourers. Baldy and the boy carried the two lanterns in front; and Father Jerome, with Adelaide leaning on his arm, followed in the rear.

The procession in this order moved slowly over the rough and uneven surface and tombstones. No requiem was chanted. On reaching the spot, the coffin was at once lowered, and



Father Jerome repeated over it the service for the dead.

The deep tone of his voice, mingled with the low rushing murmur of the wind, excited a supernatural awe; and the impression swelled the hearts of all present with an eerie sentiment of indefinite dread.

Throughout this dismal transaction no sigh escaped from Adelaide: she was serene and sustained, insomuch as to appear almost insensible. Her motions were like the mutation of an orb in its course; and when she stood, she was as a statue at rest. Knockwhinnie was calm, and by the quickness with which he observed and removed every little impediment to the regular performance of the rites, showed that he, though unaccustomed to such solemn ceremonies, was yet not mastered by his sensibility. Southennan was deeply distressed, and in his anxiety to remove Adelaide as quickly as possible from the spot, pushed part of the mould hastily into the grave with his foot. She observed the irreverence, and drew him back with some degree of violence.

Her father, who had also observed it, said,

“All is now over, Adelaide: let us return into the house, and when the sexton has done his part the servants will come to us.”

The boy, on hearing this, moved round with his lantern to show the way, and Southennan offered his arm to assist Adelaide, but she indicated, by the waving of her hand, that she still desired to remain. Her father gently remonstrated, and pointed to the troubled state of the skies to warn her of the increasing inclemency of the night. She, however, made no reply, she only drew her mantle closer and sat down on a tombstone near the grave.

When the dust was all filled in, Father Jerome pronounced the *benedicite*, and a procession was formed to return, but Adelaide sat still.

The old man, observing her intention to remain alone, directed the sexton and the servants to retire. Knockwhinnie was grieved at her sorrowful pertinacity, as it seemed to him, and earnestly, almost to chiding, entreated her to come away. After a considerable interval she arose and followed her father, and it was evident

from that moment, that a change had come over her. She had made some strong mental exertion to restrain her grief, which had almost amounted to despair, and the altered state of her feelings was manifested by a brief expression.

“He loved me not!” said she: “and perhaps, towards him my regard was too openly disclosed; but that is past. Peace be with him!”

At these words the boy touched the arm of his master with a sudden jerk, and cried, with a fearful smothered voice in his ear,

“Look there!”

Southennan turned hastily round, and beheld a tall dark form between him and a faint streak of the Northern lights, which at that moment streamed up from the horizon. It was standing on a table-tomb, close by the path they were to pass.

Southennan snatched the lantern from the boy, and held it up to examine who appeared there so apparitional. The light flashed full on the visage of the stranger. He was ghastly pale; his eyes glittered; and his teeth were

hideously on edge, white and protuberant. Another sweep of the lantern revealed a dagger glimmering in his elevated grasp, ready to strike.

All eyes were fixed upon the obtruder, and in the same moment Johnnie Gaff, with an irresistible stroke of the spade in his hand, struck down the uplifted arm with such energy, that the assassin was hurled headlong from the tomb down upon the ground, and so stunned by the fall that he lay motionless where he fell.

The lights were instantly brought around him, and on raising his head he was discovered to be Auchenbrae. With his characteristic impetuosity Knockwhinnie would instantly have turned his own dagger against him, but Southennan wrested it from his hand.

“No,” exclaimed he; “it must not be so. Conduct Adelaide from this dreadful place, and take the boy and a light with you. I will remain with the men until this rash bedlamite, for less he cannot be, may be removed. I beseech you go at once; for see he already begins to move.”

Southennan then, with the assistance of the men, had Auchenbrae carried into the sexton's house, where, after applying the remedies easiest obtained on such occasions, he was soon recovered from the immediate effects of the contusion he had suffered in his forehead.

While Knockwhinnie with the boy, was conducting his daughter back to the house of Mrs. Marjory, Southennan entered into some conversation with his prisoner, and among other things expressed his astonishment that Auchenbrae should be so implacable against Knockwhinnie, who had never done him any harm, but whom he had so vitally injured.

Auchenbrae looked at him as he made this remark, with an almost demoniacal expression of derisive contempt, and said,

“Is it not enough, then, that I know he must be my deadly enemy? You say I have injured him deeply. Can he do otherwise than hate me? and is he not one who has proved that his revenge can only be satisfied with blood?”

“Well,” replied Southennan, with a repugnance blended with horror at these atrocious

remarks, "what would you have gained had you taken his life? Is not your condition already miserable enough? A gentleman born, hunted like a wild beast, shunned by all of your own rank, and a proverb of disgrace in the mouths of the people."

Auchenbrae, notwithstanding his weather-beaten complexion, became ghastly with rage, and had he possessed a weapon, would probably have inflicted vengeance on the spot.

"Who are you?" he exclaimed, with a shrill and throttling utterance of immeasurable passion; "Who are you, that dare to address me in that language?"

Southennan looked at him with an unchanging countenance, and said, calmly—

"I perceive it is of no avail, at least at this time, either to advise you or to argue with you."

Auchenbrae made several attempts to resume their conversation, but Southennan paid no attention to what he said, regarding his complaints and his audacity with equal indifference.

CHAPTER VI.

“ My heart revolts within me, and two voices
Make themselves audible within my bosom.”

DEATH OF WALLENSTEIN.

ON the following morning the Count Dufroy, at the request of Knockwhinnie, and with the permission of the Queen, conducted Adelaide to Linlithgow, and placed her under the care of her grandmother, the old Lady Kilburnie, who then resided there. Knockwhinnie, himself, also went at the same time into the west country, to superintend the repairs of his castle, which during his long absence had fallen into great dilapidation; but Southennan remained in Edinburgh some short time longer, not deeming it delicate to obtrude his attachment on Adelaide, until time should in some degree soften her sorrow. He had, however, another motive.

Although the almost demoniacal animosity

which Auchenbrae cherished against Knockwhinnie, and had so fiendishly avowed, filled the honourable bosom of Southennan with mingled horror and disgust, it was yet, upon consideration, not deemed advisable that any public notice should be taken of the murderous intent which had been so happily frustrated. Accordingly, before leaving the sexton's house in the morning, Southennan informed him that he would undertake, without waiting for the permission of Knockwhinnie, to let him go free. In this he evinced a discernment of character beyond his years and experience.

From the time he had refrained from conversing with Auchenbrae, he sat ruminating beside him, occasionally remarking with interest and even sympathy, the changes on his countenance, during those transient fits of contrition and self-reproach to which, as we have already described, he was sometimes subject. After a considerable interval, when the fire had fallen low, and the dawn was beginning to brighten through the aperture which served as a window to the apartment, Southennan saw



with inexpressible surprise, amounting almost to a feeling of awe, tears in the eyes of the delinquent, and recollecting in what way he had placed himself under his protection, when he surrendered in the garb of Johnnie Gaff, he said,

“ I suspect, Auchenbrae, you have a greater enemy in yourself than in Knockwhinnie,—ought you not to master that one first? I remember when we first met, the gallant bearing with which you claimed my protection. I could not have then conceived that the same person could so far forego his nature, as to place himself in your present situation.”

Auchenbrae made no reply, but the tears which glittered in his eyes began to flow down his cheeks.

“ Come,” rejoined Southennan, deeply affected, while he wondered at a grief that might be termed unmanly, “ if you regret the unprovoked injuries done to Knockwhinnie, resolve to weed your mind of the intents you indulge against him, and I will undertake that he shall not molest you.”

“I know not,” replied Auchenbrae, “why I am thus at times so moved. I would that I could keep in the mood—but it is my fate to feel upon me these breathings of a bitter spirit only at intervals, few and far between. I am one of those whose good and evil angels possess alternately the mastery of each other, but the better is the weaker, and can but briefly retain the ascendancy.”

“Take a part in the conflict,” said Southennan, falling into his fancy; “call in your will to help the good angel. Give me your honour that you will struggle against the unprovoked malice of your enmity to Knockwhinnie, and you are at liberty to depart.”

“I may do so, and with religious sincerity; but I cannot answer for sufficient constancy of purpose to maintain it.”

“Give me your promise, and try. The pledge of your honour will serve as a remembrancer when the hour of weakness, the unguarded hour, may come again.”

“I thought,” resumed Auchenbrae, “to erase the taint of my nature by turning monk. Not

one of all the brotherhood, with whom I hoped to redeem my errors, more patiently endured their penances than I did mine, or put themselves to the probation of such severities; but the Fiend ever and anon prevailed. As often as I reached the hill-top resolution failed, and I was hurled again to the bottom!"

"Still," replied Southennan, "that is no reason to abandon the endeavour. Say only, you will impose a truce on your revenge, if so you call it, and I will let you go."

"It is soon said; but how long shall I be able to enforce it?"

"I will trust you; but remember, you must give me notice when you desire it shall end."

Some further conversation to the same effect passed between them, and in the end Southennan consented to his escape, and they left the sexton's house together as the sun was rising; Auchenbrae expressing his determination to set out immediately for England, that among strangers and new scenes he might cultivate sedater habits and better thoughts, as if he could leave his nature and propensities behind.

His friends, rejoicing in this resolution, gladly procured for him letters to many persons of note at the Court of Elizabeth, and, among others, to the Earl of Lennox, the father of Lord Darnley: Rizzio also was applied to on his behalf, and, in consequence, entrusted him with duplicates of the dispatches to the Scottish ambassador, relative to the Queen's matrimonial intentions.

Before this Rizzio knew nothing of him, not even his name; but when he came to receive the dispatches, he perceived something of his reckless humour, and a short conversation convinced him that he might be rendered subservient to his own views. He accordingly apprized him in some degree of the contents and object of the letters, and informed him it was understood that Darnley, who stood in the same relationship to the English Queen as their own Sovereign, had many accomplishments, which might render him an acceptable match, and he engaged Auchenbrae to make himself acquainted with that young nobleman, and to write him confidentially as to his true character, an office which, by implying a trust of some

delicacy, was agreeable to, though little in accordance with the habitual vocations of Auchenbrae. Out of this accidental arrangement, which was not regarded at the time of any very special importance, the voluntary exile, immediately on reaching London, was induced to cultivate the confidence of Darnley, a congenial spirit, and to communicate the results of his observations to Rizzio. In the end, at the suggestion of the Italian, he so worked upon the inclinations and vanities of Darnley, that he persuaded him to visit the Scottish Court, not, however, ostensibly as a candidate for the Queen's favour, but as a visitor, who was heir to the large domains of the earldom of Lennox. But before we proceed with the narrative of the events which ensued, it is necessary to enter into some historical explanations.

CHAPTER VII.

“ The heavens still must work.”

CYMBELINE.

THE intimation of the Queen's intention to marry again, led to many proposals from foreign princes, but they were all objectionable. The dislike of the nation to a foreign marriage, independent of religious considerations, ultimately induced the friends of the Scottish Queen to advise her to an union with some one of those who stood in the line of succession to the Crown; and the young Lord Darnley, among others, was suggested as the most desirable connexion, on many accounts, and particularly as his mother's claim to the succession of the English Crown was thought by many superior to that of Mary. She

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was the daughter of Margaret, the eldest sister of Henry VIII. by the Earl of Angus, whom that princess married after the death of her chivalrous husband, James IV. the hero of Flodden Field and Marmion.

In proposing this match, the interests both of Scotland and of England were judiciously consulted; for the Countess of Lennox, the mother of Darnley, though born of a second marriage, was one degree nearer in the blood royal of England than Mary. She was the daughter, Mary only the grand-daughter, of Margaret, from whom their respective claims were derived; and there was some dubiety, in those days, in the right of succession, arising from this circumstance.

Rizzio was not long of being sensible of the popular advantages which Darnley possessed over every other competitor, and he had learned from Auchenbrae, that, in external accomplishments and appearance, the young Lord had no rival in the English court.

He was then in the first bloom and vigour of youth: in beauty and gracefulness of person he

surpassed all his contemporaries; he eminently excelled in those arts which add ease and elegance to external form, and which enabled him not only to dazzle, but to please. His intellectual qualifications were not, however, commensurate with his appearance: he was soft and simple, addicted to pleasure, conceited, and of a mean understanding; but these defects were the qualities which recommended him to Rizzio, and induced him to urge Auchenbrae, as we have intimated, to persuade Darnley to visit the Court of Holyrood.

Mary was of an age and of a temper to feel the full influence of Darnley's accomplishments: and the impression which he made upon her was visible from the time of their first interview. The whole business of the Court was, from that day, devoted to amuse and to entertain this illustrious guest; and in all those scenes of gaiety, Darnley, whose qualifications were entirely superficial and showy, appeared to great advantage. His conquest of the Queen's heart became complete; and inclination prompted her to conclude a marriage, the first thought of

which had probably been suggested by considerations merely political.

But before we proceed to the circumstances immediately connected with the nuptials, it is necessary to advert to a public event, which, though in itself foreign to that transaction, had, by its results on others, a material effect upon it.

There had been a rebellion in the North, in which the Prior of St. Andrew's, who had long abjured the Roman church, and had secularized himself, commanded the Queen's forces. In this service he was greatly distinguished, and in consequence she rewarded him with the earldom of Murray.

Few of the Scottish statesmen of that turbulent time have been more misrepresented than this eminent character. The Papists, indignant at his apostacy, with malevolent ingenuity, have traduced his purest actions; and the Protestants, as it were in retaliation, have had as little respect for truth in extenuating his errors. He may not, in point of talent, have been a great man; but the commonalty, in applying to him

the epithet of “ the good Regent,” seem to have justly appreciated his virtues, of which prudence was undoubtedly the predominant, united with courage and fortitude.

Whether from the discipline of his ecclesiastical education, or from natural temperament, he was quiet in all his habitudes, and renowned for his piety. The sincerity of his affection for his sister, the Queen, has been questioned; but so long as Mary was true to herself, the Earl of Murray was a true brother and most devoted subject; and so much did the uncompromising Knox regard him as a man blindly zealous for her interests, that at one time, on that very account, he renounced his friendship. This rupture is a strong proof of Murray’s sincere attachment to the Queen. Nor is the part which he took in opposing her marriage with Darnley any proof to the contrary; for he was one of the first who discovered the deficiencies in that Prince’s character; and in consequence, although he had been originally favourable to the match, he soon perceived that it was not

likely to prove either happy to the Queen or fortunate to the kingdom.

It is true that, from the time of Darnley's arrival, he had experienced the inconsistencies of Mary; and when he explained to her his objections to the marriage, he soon perceived that her affections began to be gradually estranged, and that the Court favourites combined against him, and flattered the wishes of the Queen. His proud spirit could not brook the diminution of his power; and he retired into the country, and gave place to rivals with whom he was unable to contend.

His secession from the Queen's party produced such an impression on the people, that she was obliged to control her alienated feelings, and to recall him to Court, where she received him with many demonstrations of respect and confidence. Her object was to obtain his assent to her marriage; but he still refused, and from that time the calamities of her miserable reign began.

But although the Earl of Murray was the

first who publicly opposed himself to the marriage, Rizzio had soon equal cause to repent of the part he had taken in promoting the match; for Darnley, like all persons of inferior understanding, was difficult to manage, and the Italian soon discovered that weakness of judgment is not always accompanied with suitable humility. The affection with which the Queen at first sight was inspired for the young Lord, surpassed his calculations; he had trusted that by his own address alone he would accomplish the marriage, and thereby lay Darnley under the greatest obligations: but in this he was disappointed; for the partiality of Mary was so openly manifested, that Darnley could in no way regard himself as indebted to Rizzio.

The Italian, however, though disappointed, was not baffled; he saw that the folly of the young Lord could not long remain undiscovered by the Queen, nor the fascination of his personal beauty long prevent the exercise of her natural intelligence; and accordingly, as ascendancy in the state was the object of his ambition,

he perceived that the wisest course for his purposes was to devote himself exclusively to her Majesty.

Having thus reminded the reader of these historical circumstances, we shall now resume the domestic transactions of the Scottish Court.

CHAPTER VIII.

“ I had rather be a toad,
 And live upon the vapour of a dungeon,
 Than keep a corner in the thing I love
 For others' use.”

OTHELLO.

WHEN the time appointed for the nuptials of Mary and Darnley drew near, 'Adelaide was invited back to Court; and Southennan, who had, during that interval, been abroad, returned to partake of the bridal festivities. For, notwithstanding the distracted state of the kingdom, arising from the conflicts of the two religious factions, the Protestants and the Papists, the celebration of the marriage was expected to be one of the most brilliant incidents in the domestic records of Scotland.

Rizzio by this time had risen to high consideration with the Queen, and enjoyed a greater

degree of her favour than any other individual of her government. He was more freely admitted to her private circle, and more consulted in her personal concerns. This afforded him opportunities of becoming more familiarly acquainted with the mild and retiring merits of Adelaide than he had been before. During the preparations for the royal nuptials, he was observed by Darnley to pay her, as he supposed, particular attention. But only one passion can rule in the human heart; and Rizzio was too much possessed by ambition, to yield to any gentler sentiment.

Darnley, from observing this supposed attachment, was led to be more particular in his notice of Adelaide herself; and, in consequence, the marriage had not been celebrated many weeks, when the sharp-sighted Italian discovered that she was becoming the object of his faithless designs—a discovery which his ingenuity suggested might be turned to his own advantage. In the meantime, the sorrow of Adelaide for the fate of her first love had faded; but the affection which Southennan had so long cherished was undimi-

nished; and soon after her return to Court, Rizzio, as well as many others, saw that it was no longer a hopeless passion.

Darnley, who was never restrained in his self-indulgence by considerations of delicacy, began, with indecorous warmth, even before the honeymoon was well over, to express to Adelaide his admiration of her beauty. At first she ascribed the familiarity to his obtuse tact, which by this time had become sufficiently obvious; but when he repeated it with greater freedom, she evinced her resentment, by calmly assuring him, that unless he desisted, she would solicit her Majesty's permission to withdraw from Court.

This decision should have apprised the weak and licentious prince of the necessity of bridling his impetuous desires; but it had only the effect of making him feel, that in marrying the Queen he had subjected himself to some degree of bondage, and to a responsibility at variance with what he conceived to be happiness. This unwise reflection, and the circumstance of being on all occasions addressed as the inferior of the Queen, made him, as it were, disgusted with the dignity

to which he had been raised; and it destroyed the enjoyment and prosperity which, it may be almost said, naturally appertained to his lot.

It was a remarkable instance of the innate coarseness of Darnley's character, that although his attention had been first attracted to Adelaide by the manner of Rizzio towards her, he yet made him the confidant of the passion with which she had animated himself.

Rizzio affected grief and apprehension at the disclosure, and, with all his art and eloquence, pointed out the danger he was provoking, by so soon after his marriage giving the Queen so great a cause of complaint, and, to the noblemen who had been averse to the match, warrantry to take some decided step to his prejudice.

These strictures had the effect which they were probably intended to produce; they apprised Darnley that he had placed himself so far in the power of Rizzio. Still, with that singular contempt of public opinion, which led himself and the kingdom afterwards into so many troubles, the difficulties which stood in the way of gratifying his guilty wishes became incite-

ments; and he again addressed Adelaide, with greater boldness. He had not discernment enough to perceive, that under her meek exterior and mild demeanour, a prompt and resolute spirit lay couched.

It was at a mask in the Palace that he repeated his profane admiration. Adelaide listened to him for some time with grave attention; and when, mistaking her silence and serenity, he concluded with an ignominious proposal, she made him a profound reverence, and, without returning any answer, went to Southennan, who was standing at some distance, and informed him of the insult she had received from the King; for the infatuated Mary had conferred on Darnley that dignity.

Considering the disparity of rank between the parties, and the peculiar circumstances of Darnley, the communication placed our hero in a situation of extreme difficulty; but the latent energy of Adelaide being roused, her conduct on the occasion was full of dignity. Leaving Southennan to determine as to what his own conduct should be, she returned to the King,



and, with all becoming humility, informed his Majesty that she had reported his proposal to Southennan, to whom his Majesty was aware she had been for some time betrothed. The immediate effect of this firmness on the rash and shallow Darnley, was an angry and petulant remonstrance from him, in which, however, he was suddenly checked, by Southennan coming close up to him, and looking him sternly in the face; at the same time asking the Count Dufroy, who was leaning on his arm, something which gave him an opportunity of adding these words, which he delivered with an emphasis that Darnley could not misunderstand:

“While the law, by the distractions of the kingdom, is unable to protect the subject, the vindication of private wrongs by personal means is perhaps a duty.”

The Count, who was opposed to that pernicious doctrine of the age, replied, in a regretful tone,

“I had thought better of you, Southennan, than that you would ever advocate opinions so dangerous to society.”

“ I once thought so too,” replied Southennan, his countenance glowing with indignation, as he again looked at Darnley; “ but I had not then conceived it possible that I could be injured without having the means of obtaining redress; far less that one who might not be called to account would venture to do so !”

The Count Dufroy, altogether unaware of the provocation, resumed his argument, and said,

“ I can never admit the occultation of a principle, however strong the expediency of it may appear, as less itself than a great crime.”

“ Let us see,” replied Southennan, “ what his Majesty thinks on the subject.”

But Darnley was alarmed at the tone and look of Southennan; and yielding to his natural pusillanimity, deserted alike by manhood and dignity, he hastily retired to another apartment.

For that time the Queen was spared from hearing of the fickle and unworthy disposition of her young consort; but his true character could not long be concealed from her penetration. Before the wedding festivals were over, she herself discovered the slight hold she pos-

sessed over his affections; and she frequently sighed with a conviction, that in disregarding the admonitions of the Earl of Murray, she had incurred the hazard of dishonour to herself, and of troubles to the kingdom. But even in these painful reflections, her attachment to the ill-fated cause of them suffered no material change. She attributed the unprincipled conduct of Darnley to the reckless unsteadiness of youth; and flattered herself, by some greater endeavour to please, she would allure him from his errors. This, the first dictate of love conscious of being neglected, was calculated to impair its power. The endeavour to please was soon felt to be a task; and, like all other tasks, it tired the labourer.

CHAPTER IX.

“ ——— Mine Italian brain
 'Gan, in your duller Britain, operate
 Most vilely.”

CYMBELINE.

As soon as the nuptial revels were over, the Count Dufroy announced his intention of returning to France. He conceived that he had, both to the letter and the spirit, performed his promise to the Queen's uncles, the Princes of Lorraine; and that now, when she had blended her fortunes with those of a consort, he could with no consistency do otherwise than abdicate the charge he had undertaken, in consenting to accompany her as a personal adviser to Scotland. But he was mortified at the apparent indifference with which she accepted his resignation, and yet he ought not to have been so.

His duty had obliged him to controvert her

inclinations; but, although he uniformly acted with his wonted delicacy, yet such had been the state of her mind for some time previous, that she shrank involuntarily from him, as well as from all those in whom she was assured, both by their character and her own experience, confidence might be safest placed. She was in that condition in which the counsels of the wisest friendships are often irksome; when, though the wisdom be acknowledged, the icy touch of destiny benumbs the will, and freezes the current of action. The demon of her race was asserting his dominion; the unknown ancestral curse which had for so many ages blasted her fathers, was falling upon her; and, conscious of being in the stream of fate, she sat as amazed and helpless as the Indian, when he feels his canoe hurling him towards some inevitable cataract.

“Has then your Majesty,” said the Count, “no wish, of which I may be the honoured bearer to the Princes?”

“Truly, I might laden you with wishes,” she replied; “but it would be sending chaff to the mill; for all mine are buds that never come to

blossom. Tell the Cardinal, however, that I beseech to be remembered in his prayers; and," she subjoined, in a low and inward voice, "I need that charity."

"Is there no more your Majesty would be pleased I should communicate?" said the Count.

"What more? You will tell his eminence that you have seen me married: doubtless you can say, happily?" And looking at him inquisitively for an instant, she added, in a tone so calm and sad that it almost overcame his firmness, "Tell him I am matched as becomes the fortunes of my house"—and her voice slightly faltered, but, after a momentary pause, she resumed, "and he knows that the King is of the same line."

'These few simple words spoke volumes to the Count; but they were uttered with so much apparent equanimity, that he could no otherwise receive them than as light and ordinary phrases, even while he felt them sink into his heart like drops of molten fire.

As he was on the point of retiring, she rose with the evident intention of evincing the sense

she entertained of his faithful and dignified services, but a sudden paleness overspread her countenance, and, drawing her hand hurriedly over her eyes, she abruptly left the room.

Whatever the disappointment might have been which the Count had suffered by the seeming coolness with which his resignation had been accepted, the profound and hidden sensibility betrayed in this little scene changed it to a far different feeling. That her marriage would prove unfortunate was a prospective fear, which he shared in common with many of her truest servants; but that her hopes were already suffering blight, was a discovery which too soon anticipated his darkest apprehensions.

The departure of the Count Dufroy was followed by that of nearly all the other distinguished foreigners: Rizzio was the only one of talent and influence who remained; but perhaps there was no other with whom the Scottish nobles and gentry would have more willingly parted. His talents were fully acknowledged; and, in his capacity as foreign secretary to the Queen, he had continued to prove his

superiority, both of understanding and intelligence, on every new occasion wherein he was called to act. But it was alleged, not without reason, that he conducted for his mistress a secret correspondence with the leaders of the Papal party on the continent, prejudicial to the interest of the State and to the ecclesiastical reformation of Scotland. Moreover his personal conduct had for some time, as trusts and riches were heaped upon him, become offensive to many of the old statesmen, and disagreeable to the courtiers in general. He affected extraordinary splendour in his appearance, which was rendered the more remarkable, as his personal endowments were in no way eminent; nor was he careful to abate that envy which always attends such an extraordinary and rapid change of fortune; on the contrary, he studied to display the whole extent of his favour and power. He addressed often and familiarly the Queen in public; he equalled the greatest and most opulent subjects in the richness of his apparel and the number of his attendants. In all his behaviour he discovered an overweening arrogance and

the intoxication of prosperity, and he retaliated the indignation which such indiscretion provoked, by an insolence that belied the solidity of his judgment, and that acuteness which, in matters of business, gave him always the ascendancy.

Besides the obnoxious ostentation of Rizzio in his public conduct, there was a sinister method in his management of private concerns, which daily became more and more manifest, and which rendered his integrity greatly questionable. No man saw the defects of Darnley's character clearer; but he appeared to lend himself to the imprudence of that misguided prince, with a flexibility which too evidently showed that it was with the design of ruling him through his passions. In this, however, he was only acting with that dissimulation of which he was universally suspected. He had early perceived that the weakness and inconsistency of Darnley afforded no hold by which he could rule him to his purposes; and in consequence, while he seemed sedulous to indulge his humours, he was only ingeniously contri-

bating to widen the breach between him and the Queen. The incident recorded in the foregoing chapter respecting the conduct of Southennan towards the King, after the insult to Adelaide, was the first in which the Italian exerted his subtlety.

So long as the Count Dufroy remained at Court, the King, apprized by the demeanour of Southennan of the resistance he would encounter by persevering in his designs against Adelaide, abstained from any further open molestation ; but the restraint which he put upon himself only served to exasperate his intentions. He complained to Rizzio of the audacity, as he described it, of Southennan, and threatened, more for revenge than for his admiration of Adelaide, to accomplish his purposes. Adherence, however, either to principle or to system was beyond his power, and thus it came to pass, immediately after the departure of the Count, of whom he stood more in awe than of Southennan, that he again more openly addressed himself to Adelaide, at a time too when even greater licentiousness would have been

more wary. The period was fixed for her marriage with Southennan, and it was during the preparations that Darnley again ventured to divulge his repulsed and dishonourable desires.

CHAPTER X.

“ Dangerous conceits are in their nature poisons
Which at the first are scarce found to distaste.
But with a little act upon the blood,
Burn like the mines of sulphur.”

OTHELLO.

SOME few days after the Count Dufroy had left the kingdom, the Queen happened, from indisposition, to keep her chamber, and being somewhat depressed in spirits, she requested particularly the attendance of Adelaide. It might have been thought, considering the tone of her spirits, that she would have preferred a more lively companion; but there is an affinity between melancholy and thoughtfulness, and from the pensive character of Adelaide her Majesty conceived she was more likely to derive relief, than from her other ladies, who were all of a gayer temperament.

On this occasion she was surprized when

Adelaide entered the room, to observe that instead of her wonted mild serenity, she was flushed with a degree of passion approximating to anger, so strong that it could neither be controlled nor concealed.

The Queen took, however, no notice of her emotion, but began to speak of inconsiderable topics; and for some time, endeavouring to rally her self-possession, Adelaide sustained the conversation without any very obvious absence of mind; but still occasionally she fell into brief fits of abstraction, and more than once with difficulty refrained from weeping.

“What has befallen you?” said the Queen, affecting cheerfulness, “I would advise you to reserve your tears until after the wedding. You may then have occasion for more than them all.”

This was said playfully, but Adelaide knew it had in it much of sincerity; for although her Majesty had not then breathed any complaint of the reckless conduct of Darnley, it had been manifest that she was sensible both of its tendency and extent. Instead of replying, Adelaide gave vent to her tears.

“How! exclaimed Mary,” what is this! What indeed could have caused these tears?”

Adelaide, relieved by her weeping, then said, “I grieve that I must leave your Majesty; I can no longer remain here.”

The Queen, surprised at this unexpected information, with her characteristic quickness, discerned that something extraordinary must have occurred, and eagerly inquired what had happened to occasion the adoption of such a resolution so suddenly.

The reply of Adelaide, without being exactly evasive, was intended to lead the attention of the Queen to some other subject.

“It is necessary,” said she, “that I should have time for some domestic arrangements, and I have thought it advisable to place myself either with the Lady Kilburnie, or Southennan’s mother, until the wedding preparations are complete.”

The Queen was struck with this answer, and steadily looked at her, saying,

“Oh! that is discreet. But why these tears? It may be they flow at the idea, shall I say, of

leaving me ; but that anger, Adelaide, comes of no grief. What wrong have you endured ? ”

“ Wrong ! ” exclaimed Adelaide, startled at the manner in which her Majesty had so keenly detected the true nature of her agitation.

“ Yes, wrong ! and who dare by look, gesture, or intention, vex you here,” said the Queen, with an energy in her voice that betokened the exercise of resentment.

“ I implore your Majesty to heed not my accidental caprice.”

“ Say not so ; call it by a fitter epithet. Ah ! Adelaide, I can guess what you are afraid to tell ; ” and with these words the Queen rose abruptly from her seat, and in strong perturbation walked several times across the room, while Adelaide sat trembling and alarmed, lest she had expressed more than she was conscious of having said.

The Queen soon recovered her self-command, and resuming her seat, smiled, but with a cast of sadness, as she again, with affected gaiety, observed,

“ Our lots are curiously ravelled. I had the

misfortune to mar your first love; have the malicious stars put it in your power to avenge it. I ask you no more questions, but as I have more than once suspected, the King regards you——”

“ Alas! alas! it is no fault of mine,” interrupted Adelaide, with impassioned earnestness.

“ I know it,” said the Queen, “ would it were so. Would that I could blame you—then might I hope the faithlessness, for which I fear there is no cure, would be dispelled by removing the cause. No, Adelaide, I need no protestation to assure me of your innocence. Even in his guilt I perceive but the fatality which pursues our blood.”

Whilst they were thus speaking, the King came into the room, and on seeing Adelaide there, and in tears, he stood for a moment in visible consternation. He at once concluded that she had complained of his freedom, and he saw by the proud and elevated expression of the Queen’s countenance, her opinion of his delinquency. At first he felt inclined to treat the affair jocularly, but with that lack of propriety,

which was the very habitude of his mind, he put on an offended air, and began to vindicate himself, believing that he had been accused.

“ I assure your Majesty,” was his first expression, “ that this lady is either too cunning, or too sensitive.”

The eyes of Adelaide flashed with indignation ; and foreseeing the folly into which he was falling, she immediately retired.

“ In what way ? ” inquired the Queen, with some degree of coldness and reserve.

“ I see,” replied Darnley, “ that she has been frightening your Majesty’s jealousy by complaining ——”

“ Complaining ! of what ? ” said the Queen.

“ Oh, I met her in the gallery, and complimenting her on the bridal beauty of her appearance, would have saluted her. She spurned, as if it were some dreadful violation ——”

“ She has told me none of that,” replied the Queen, with increasing coldness, which Darnley observing, said petulantly,

“ Oh, jealousy is not to be tamed by telling the truth.”

“ Were there not more offence in your rudeness than you have described, I know not that it would furnish much cause for jealousy; but since your Majesty is aware that, in what you have done, offence has been felt, it may be as well to give her no further cause to complain: in the meantime I must suffer some inconvenience by this lightness. Adelaide has determined to retire to the country, at a time when I can ill spare her.”

The countenance of Darnley changed. He was conscious that although he had described an outline of the incident which had occurred between Adelaide and himself in the gallery, yet that the colouring and character of the transaction were wanting. He, however, still affected to make light of it; and said he had no doubt that, notwithstanding the anger he might have provoked, he and Adelaide would soon again be good friends.

“ If you think so,” said the Queen, dryly, “ you should lose no time till you have satisfied Southennan that your momentary freedom was innocent and harmless.”

Darnley, conscious that it was far different, reddened with passion, and with an unroyal vehemence, cried,

“Has she dared to speak of that?”

“Of what?” inquired the Queen, “What more have you done, that you should say, ‘has she dared to tell?’”

“Am I a slave,” cried Darnley, almost hoarse with rage, “that I must answer for all I do, and frame excuses for the misconceptions of silliness, or the misrepresentations of malice.”

“Let this controversy end here,” said the Queen; “it has done, as yet, no harm, but to dwell upon it would make it do so.”

“Must I then tamely submit to be so traduced.”

“Verily, Darnley,” said the Queen, with a smile, intended to appease his weak wrath, “if we argue more on this matter, we shall be soon as man and wife are on such occasions, both in the wrong. I am willing to pardon you, and even without exacting any promise, to trust you will hereafter prove a better boy.”

“Pardon!” echoed Darnley, with an accent of scorn.

“Come, come; let us end this altercation. I am willing, as a pledge of my hope in you for the future, to prefer your version of the story to that of Adelaide; for, in sooth, I have had no story from her at all, and had you kept your own counsel, I dare say I should have been none the wiser of any thing she might have told.” And, in saying thus much, she laughed, and offered him her hand in token of reconciliation; which, with that gallantry he could sometimes assume, and glad to escape without farther animadversion, he jocundly accepted.

CHAPTER XI.

“ With light heart stole he on his evil way,
And light of heart hath vengeance stole on after him.”

THE PICCOLOMINI.

DURING the interval between the doom of Chatelard and the Queen's marriage, when Southenman and Adelaide again made their appearance at Court, some change had taken place in the household of the former. Baldy had proved himself rather more of an intriguant than pleased his master; he had moreover become more propugnacious than consorted with his station; and, above all, he had ingratiated himself with Mrs. Marjory to such a degree, that he did not leave Edinburgh with his master, but pitched his tent up the nine-pair-of-stairs, as her husband. He had, however, been so long a faithful though never a very agreeable servant,

that Southennan remained his patron, and made their house on his return again his home.

Father Jerome returned to the Place, as the house of Southennan was called, it could not be said much disappointed at finding the Protestants exercised an ascendancy over the Queen; far beyond what the Catholics had expected; for he had soon seen that his own party pursued with too much avidity the temporal interests of the Churchmen, rather than the spiritual concerns of the church. He was dissatisfied with the conduct of his brethren; and being old and infirm, obeyed, as he said himself, the admonition of the oracle of decaying nature, to retire from the conflicts and controversies of the world.

Hughoc in the meantime had also undergone some change of character. There are few things more interesting than the four states and stages in the progress of human life. First, when the child begins to observe, and has not acquired discrimination enough to discern the true from the false, and judges altogether by appearances. Second, when all things appear to the tyro

equally deserving of watchfulness and distrust. The transition from this state into that of the more manly is often rapid, and not so obvious in its process or progress as other moral mutations, but it is no less decided; for in it the full character of the man is evolved. The fourth change is the most impressive: when the adventurer feels the coming on of infirmity, and renounces hopes and ambition. But we have no time for metaphysics; all that we intended was only to apprise our readers that, although Hughoc still retained much of his original peculiarities, he was less subject to wonderment than when he was first introduced to the reader; but a more adroit and ingenious servant. He had fewer marvels to relate to his master, and did not think that even the most extraordinary he met with, were always worthy of being related. But to resume our story.

In the course of the evening after the colloquy described between Mary and Darnley, he happened to fall in with one of the King's servants, then in quest of Auchenbrae, who had returned from England at the time of the royal nuptials.

Recollecting his former adventures with him, and the entanglement between his concerns and those of his master and of Knockwhinnie, he endeavoured to ascertain the purpose for which that personage was wanted, without, however, in any way explaining his suspicion that it could be for no good; for by this time the character of Darnley was known among the menials, and that he was addicted to dissolute companions, and evaded the society of the more respectable courtiers. Thus it happened that although Hughoc did not affect to take any interest in the errand of his companion, having then no particular duty to perform, he walked with him, conversing on indifferent topics. After visiting all the taverns to which the courtiers and other gentlemen were in the practice of resorting, they at last found Auchenbrae, who, on receiving his Majesty's message, went immediately to the Palace.

Hughoc, whose constitutional curiosity was, by his advance towards years of discretion, sharpened with suspicion, could not resist the desire of seeing the end of this adventure; for

although in its circumstances no way remarkable, still something arising from the lateness of the hour, the imperative nature of the mandate, and the regret of the King's servant that his Majesty should have any thing to do with such a tainted character, led him to apprehend that it was of more importance than it seemed ; and in consequence he resolved to watch the issue : so returning back to the Palace, he waited at the portal until Auchenbrae came out.

It would be difficult to assign any particular cause for the curiosity by which he was incited, but the haste and eagerness in the pace and manner with which Auchenbrae returned towards the city, justified the suspicion of something extraordinary being in his business ; and accordingly Hughoc followed him at a short distance through many narrow lanes and dark wynds to an inn in the Grassmarket, frequented by the west-country carriers.

He followed him into the house ; and, under the pretext of expecting something, inquired for the Glasgow carrier. Auchenbrae being in the house before him, looked at Hughoc, who af-

fect ed not to recognize him ; and his countenance underwent a slight change at the recognition. This circumstance, momentary as it was, convinced Hughoc that whatever was the machination then in hand, it had some reference to his master. As the Glasgow carrier was not come in, but was every minute expected, Hughoc sat down, pretending to wait for him ; while Auchenbrae made some inquiries for another, known by the name of Rough Tam, the Linlithgow messenger. The answer he received was to the same effect ; but Auchenbrae, instead of sitting down to wait—perhaps owing to some sense of the propriety belonging to his birth, not chusing to mingle with the coarse guests then present, went out and walked in front of the house.

The Glasgow carrier at last arrived, and Hughoc, on seeing him, inquired for a valise which he pretended to expect ; but, Willie Bell, like others of his calling, had no very distinct recollection of having brought any such thing ; and in those days way-bills had not been invented. Hughoc, in consequence of observing himself watched by Auchenbrae, said he would

wait until the wain was unloaded, but the carrier being averse, on account of the lateness of the hour, to disturb his load that night, some altercation arose between them, during which Rough Tam, on horseback, came in.

As soon as he had alighted, Auchenbrae took hold of his arm with his hand, and drew him aside for a minute or two, during which he spoke to him, in a whisper. Tam, at the conclusion, replied aloud, "Vera weel, as soon as I hae stabled my mare I'll come to you."

Auchenbrae then went away, but on this occasion Hughoc did not follow. He, however, left the house and stood in a dark close-mouth opposite, determined to discover the appointed rendezvous, and to make the acquaintance of Rough Tam.

CHAPTER XII.

“Where’s he that will unravel,
This tangle, ever tangling more and more.”

SCHILLER.

WHEN Rough Tam came out of the hostel to keep his appointment, Southennan’s man followed him at some distance, until he entered one of the wynds which led from the Cowgate to the High-street.

About half-way up the wynd was a public house, distinguished by a paper lantern over the door, into which the Linlithgow messenger entered, but Hughoc slowly reconnoitered it, and cautiously passed. At first, as the door was open, he was inclined to go in, but on second thoughts he deemed it advisable to ascertain previously the character of the house. Accordingly, he walked up to the entrance of the wynd from the High-street, where observ-

ing a cadie, as the street messengers in Edinburgh are called, he immediately made up to him.

“I think,” said he, “this is a lonesome closs. Surely that change-house, wi’ the bowet aboon the door, canna hae meikle custom.”

The cadie replied that he was much mistaken, for that it was a well-frequented house, by what he called disabled gentry, that is persons of more pretence than means.

“I’m thinking,” said Hughoc, “they would rather marvel if they saw the likes o’ me seeking a refreshment there.”

The cadie, however, assured him that he would be made very welcome; “for no man is allowed to come in that’s of the lower orders: it’s keepit by a discreet wife.”

Upon this Hughoc went back, and bravely entered: seeing no person in the public room, and knowing that Rough Tam was in the house, he inquired if he could not have a private room for himself—“I hae,” said he, “a cousin and a brother that may come before the supper’s ready.”

Martha Eccles, the landlady, a jocose little old woman, readily acceded to his request, telling him, however, that the only spare apartment was inner to another, where a friend was waiting for a gentleman. Hughoc concluded this must be Rough Tam, and that Auchenbrae had not yet joined him. Accordingly he desired to be shown into that apartment, and in passing through to it, he saw he was right in his conjecture.

Scarcely was he seated when he heard Rough Tam joined by another, and peeping through a chink in the partition, he saw it was Auchenbrae, and that Rough Tam apprized him by a sign to speak low, lest they might be overheard. In consequence their conversation, for some time, was inaudible; but as they continued and became more earnest, they spoke plainer, until at last Hughoc gathered that the business in which they were engaged related to something to be conveyed on the following night secretly to a certain house in Linlithgow.

“You will have the horses ready,” said Auchenbrae, “an hour after gloaming, and make



the best haste you can to the shore of Leith, where you will find a boat in which you will place her."

"Whisht, whisht!" said Tam, to repress the conversational tone and accent which his companion was inadvertently using. What followed was, owing to this admonition, spoken in so low a voice that it was indistinct to the listener. In the course, however, of a few minutes Auchenbrae again forgot himself, and said, loud enough to be heard,

"And when he goes off, which the sooner he does the better, warn him to tell the old woman to have her house quiet, and to take nobody in but the gentleman, and to treat the lady with all manner of respect."

"I doubt," said Tam, with a half laugh, also forgetting the risk he ran of the listener, "ye're at your auld deevilry, Auchenbrae. Wha's the leddy, and wha's the d——d wuddy bird that ye would hae me to put my thrapple in a girn for?"

"Hush!" cried Auchenbrae, recovering his recollection by hearing the eve's-dropper cough.

For a considerable time they again talked in a whisper, but becoming again more in earnest, Tam forgot himself, and said,

“Deil ae plack less, Auchenbrae. Ye’ll gie me five-and-twenty merk, counted down clean siller, aneath your thumb in my loof, or I move a toe in this black job—for it’s a black job. And what’s mair, if ye dinna, Auchenbrae, I’ll send the swine through’t, and tell the Lord Provost o’ your plot. Five-and-twenty merk, Auchenbrae, shall be my erles before I quit this house this night, and the wage when the wark’s dune, d——n me, but it shall be a sappy ane; for as this is no ane o’ your ain debauches, I hae a guess it’s for somebody that can pay for’t.”

Auchenbrae again admonished him by eye and finger, to speak more guardedly, and they again whispered, so that Hughoc heard no more; for at this juncture, the landlady brought in his supper, and Auchenbrae parted from his coadjutor, saying,

“In the morning, depend upon it, you shall have it.”

Rough Tam did not follow him, but said to

the old woman, that he would be glad to have something likewise for supper, being hungry after his journey. In this good fortune again smiled on Hughoc's purposes, and he dexterously turned the accident to account; for in retiring the landlady left the door open, which enabled him to hear what Tam said, and he invited him to partake with him, observing that it might be some time before another supper could be got ready, and that there was enough to serve both. The invitation was readily accepted, and Tam, moving with his stoup of drink into the inner room, soon made himself at ease.

“ I think,” said Hughoc to him, “ I hae seen that gentleman that left you when Lucky brought in the provender ? ”

“ Nae doubt but ye may, and make nae brag o' where it was; for it is as like to hae been wi' the hangman as wi' Mess John. He's an out-straplous deevil's claw as ever gaed up the black stairs o' a tolbooth; but he's no an ill fallow to do an ill turn for: in that respect, I maun say, he has the heels o' auld Cloutie, whom the mair ye serve the waur he pays.”

“Dear me,” replied Hughoc, “I thought him a most quiet-spoken man.”

“There was a reason for that,” said Tam: “maybe what we were pactioning was something that the heavens shouldna’ hear, nor man either.”

“It’s no my business to scald my lips in other folk’s kail: but let me help you to this fish. Oh! by the bye, surely this isna the Auchenbrae that was guilty some years ago o’ the straemash wi’ Knockwhinnie’s leddy: now I mind him very weel: he’s a dreadfu’ thief o’ other men’s wives, they say!”

“And he’s no ill,” replied Tam, “at whuding awa’ wi’ their daughters likewise. I would be nane surprised if Knockwhinnie fand that or lang, to his cost likewise.”

“I doubt,” said Hughoc, “that’ll be a supple trick; for she’s weel herded, and is to be married very soon to that west country gallant, Southennan.”

“Aye,” said Tam; “a west country gallant. Wha can it be that would fling him o’er the brigg?”

As they were thus speaking Tam’s countenance

suddenly altered, and he muttered, "What a senseless claverin' tongue is in my mouth!" And, as if he suddenly recollected something he had neglected, he said "Deevils! young lad, I'm forgetting mysel': I ought no to be here at this time; sae dinna take it ill that I run awa'. On some other night, if ye'll come to where I put up, I'll gie you baith a tappit-hen and a skirlie-pan."

And so saying he hastily departed, and Hughoc, without lingering long behind, settled his "lawing" and hastened home to his master with the tale of his suspicions and discoveries.

CHAPTER XIII.

“ We subalterns have no will of our own :
 The free, the mighty man alone may listen
 To the fair impulse of his human nature.”

COLERIDGE'S *WALLENSTEIN*.

AT an early hour next morning Southennan roused Knockwhinnie, and related to him what his servant had discovered, and his conjectures as to the object of the meditated abduction. There could, indeed, be no question as to this point, nor as to the author of the machination; so that the only thing they had to consider was, some mode of frustrating the profligate intentions of Darnley, a measure which neither of them was at any time very well qualified to arrange; Knockwhinnie by his impetuosity, and our hero by his dislike of sinister stratagems.

After some earnest and anxious discussion

Southennan proposed that he should see Rizzio on the subject; for by this time, short as the interval had been since the royal marriage, it was notorious to all the Court that a breach was widening between the Queen and King; so obviously, indeed, that the Italian, who had for a long period been constantly ingratiating himself with the former, and who had acquired great influence with her, was manifestly withdrawing, as it might be justly said, his patronage from the latter.

They proceeded to the palace together: Knockwhinnie went to his daughter, who reoccupied her old apartments, and Southennan in quest of Rizzio, whom he found alone and in visible perplexity, with papers and newly opened dispatches before him.

“I am glad to see you,” exclaimed the Italian; I have but just sent a servant to request you to come to me. These papers concern you in some degree, and the business is urgent.” After some further preliminary explanation he continued, without waiting for any remark: “Last night we had letters from the

Low Countries; and among other strange matters, they report, that a clandestine correspondence has been discovered to have existed for some time between certain leaders of the Protestants in Rotterdam, and some of the Scottish lords of the congregation in the west, which has for its object an universal union and combination against the Catholics; but the names of the Scottish conspirators have not been ascertained. In consequence of these advices, orders were given to stop all letters directed to the west country, on whomsoever found, addressed to persons of any note connected with the Protestants. Among others, one of the King's servants was stopped, and, in despite of resistance, this letter was taken from him. It is without signature; but written by some person in the King's confidence, and your name is mentioned in it, with a caution to be watchful of you: and yet, though the business to which it relates is unintelligible to me, it must be important. Can you give me any cue to it?"

Southennan read the letter, and at once declared that he had called on the very business

to which it plainly referred. He then related the substance of the story received from his servant, and observed, that the writer was evidently instructing the person to whom it was addressed, to prepare for the reception of the King.

While they were considering the probability of Darnley being engaged in such a derogatory business, notice was brought in that their Majesties intended, that afternoon, to visit Linlithgow, for a few days, and that Rizzio was to follow them as early as possible. Had there been any doubt in the mind of Southennan as to the King's part in the plot, it would have been settled by this sudden and unaccountable movement. The Italian, too, was perfectly persuaded of the fact, and perhaps felt sincerely the indignation he expressed against Darnley, not only for the evident contempt in which he held the esteem and affection of the Queen, but the criminality of his intents on the honour of Adelaide. For however lax his own principles were in the prosecution of his ambition, in all other things, which did not interfere with the

gratification of that great passion, he was not without commendable merit, but was even susceptible of friendly attachments.

Southennan, in the flush of his anger, suggested that the machinations should be exposed to her Majesty.

“No: not yet,” said Rizzio; “neither his weakness nor wickedness are sufficiently known to the public to render so decided a step prudent; nor is the Queen yet so sensible of his unworthiness as to make the story acceptable. He must be allowed to stain himself with darker hues, before we can venture to direct her indignation against him.”

Southennan shuddered at the cold craft of the observation, and experienced something like a sentiment of antipathy suddenly prompting him to retire. The Italian, however, perceiving that he had unguardedly produced a stronger impression than he had intended, added,

“It is harsh to speak so of any man; but the King is one of those sort of characters who cannot be improved—there is not material enough about him to sustain a change: his

passions and selfwill are too vehement to admit of neutrality : he cannot choose but to do evil—it is the natural secretion of all the faculties of his mind and body.”

“ And yet,” replied Southennan, “ his humanity is largely praised, and this licentiousness seems but of recent growth.”

“ Of recent detection,” said Rizzio. “ His blamelessness, before he was exalted to share the throne, was not of virtue, but of cowardice. He durst not do what he would have done : and, as to his humanity—look to him when he shall have cause for revenge !”

“ What would you, then, advise me to do ?”

“ Get Adelaide removed from the Court, without delay, this very day.”

“ But in what will that make her safer from the designs of one who hath neither will nor wish to control his desires, however vicious or impure ?”

“ Let no such apprehension trouble you : men so weak, fortunately for those whom their power would enable them to injure, are the mere agents of impulses—out of sight out of

mind, is the tenour of their life. Had the weak the same constancy in purpose as the strong, fools would rule the world. No, Southennan, take Adelaide away, and his passion will not outlast the present moon, which, three nights ago, passed the full."

"But what may be said to the Queen?"

"Excuse it afterwards. It is often easier to justify a fault which has been committed, than to give a satisfactory reason for a good deed before it is done. Their Majesties will go, as you have heard, in the afternoon, to Linlithgow: while they are absent, cannot you, with her father, convey Adelaide where you will—to England or France?"

"There is, at least, discretion in what you advise; but it is a hard condition to leave our country, merely because we may not venture to cope with an aggressor."

"Hush!" interposed Rizzio. "Your iron barons will in due season find out some method of redressing the wrong. But we speak too freely: and were it not for the duty I owe the Queen, I would be more your friend in this

matter. Take my advice, and leave the issue to fortune."

Southennan soon retired, but without any clear purpose in view. It seemed a bootless stratagem to remove Adelaide only from Court, when the King's power was spread through the kingdom; and the thought of conveying her abroad, begat ideas dangerous to fealty.

From Rizzio he went to confer with Knockwhinnie, and to communicate what had passed, as well as what the Italian had suggested; but as he approached the door of Adelaide's apartment, and heard him laughing within, the sound grated on his ear, and his feelings discordantly jangled, to such a degree, that he hesitated to advance: perhaps he would even have retired without seeking admittance, had not the door been then opened, and Knockwhinnie come out.

CHAPTER XIV.

“ The Emperor
 Hath dealt with me amiss ; and if I would
 I could repay him with usurious interest
 For the evil he hath done me.”

COLERIDGE'S WALLENSTEIN.

KNOCKWHINNIE, who was in a cheerful humour, would have returned into his daughter's apartment with Southennan ; but the latter, who was serious and troubled, declined the proposal, and they returned up into the city together.

“ I suspect,” said Knockwhinnie, as they came out of the Palace, “ we have been frightening ourselves with an imagination. Their Majesties go, in the afternoon, to Linlithgow ; and Adelaide, with the Lady Mary Livingston, follows them in the evening.”

“ Follow in the evening ! ” exclaimed Southennan ; “ that, at least, is unusual. The country is open ; the road is rough ; it will be late before they arrive.”

“ What says the Italian ? ” inquired Knockwhinnie, in some degree impressed with the seriousness of his companion.

“ Nothing to change my apprehensions ; but rather to strengthen them. We have to deal with a man whose wickedness is not so bad as his weakness ; or rather, of whom it may be said, that he is wicked because he is weak. Rizzio advises, and with good reasons for the advice, that Adelaide should at once be removed beyond his reach. Why then should we, for matters of idle ceremony, postpone our marriage ? Let it take place without delay.”

Knockwhinnie made no reply, but walked on for some time thoughtfully, and then he observed,

“ But in what will she be safer from his baseness by becoming your wife.”

“ I have felt that scalding thought,” replied Southennan with energy ; “ and the reflection

that he is the King scorches me. Her Majesty can alone effectually interpose; and yet, to ask her protection were to put scorpions beneath her pillow. But something must be done, and speedily: let us return to Adelaide; she must not go to Linlithgow—some device must be contrived to prevent her.”

The earnestness with which Southennan was animated had its natural sympathetic effect on Knockwhinnie. The lightness with which he had left his daughter was dissipated; he became persuaded that she stood in greater jeopardy than he was willing to believe; and with his characteristic temerity, resolved on the instant to remove her from the Queen's service. But Southennan, though equally anxious to see her in safety, more judiciously considered, that it could not be done without coming to some explanation with the Queen, an impracticable step without hazarding her Majesty's peace of mind, and without precipitating a domestic wreck, which, however obviously inevitable, honour and duty alike called upon them as men and subjects to avert.

On arriving at the portal of the Palace, they saw the King, with a numerous train of his associates, preparing to ride out. The grooms held the horses; but, contrary to his custom on similar occasions, his Majesty, instead of mounting at once, lingered as if for some one expected; a circumstance which was noticed by the spectators as an unwonted forgetfulness of his own dignity—and it was indeed so; for presently Auchenbrae made his appearance, accompanied by a rude, coarse, athletic clown, cleaned and trimmed for the occasion—Rough Tam.

Auchenbrae, leaving him a little behind, went directly towards his Majesty, with whom his business was soon despatched: it consisted but of a few words, and in the King giving him his purse.

This brief scene, from its publicity, perhaps seemed to those who had no suspicion of its object, to lack something in propriety; still it was not so to such a degree as to attract particular notice; for those who are accustomed to act in the presence of servants and attendants are less considerate of time and place in the

management of their affairs than the rest of mankind; they speak louder and freer, and stand less in awe of being observed or overheard; and they enjoy, in consequence, the advantage of being regarded by their witnesses as transacting but light matters when often engaged with the gravest.

The father and lover of Adelaide made no remark on what they saw take place; but looking seriously at each other, mended their pace to avoid the royal cavalcade; for the King mounted immediately on giving his purse to Auchenbrae, and came forward, as it were to meet them. As it was not exactly the course he was required to take, for he never rode into the city, they both felt an unaccountable persuasion that he was actuated in the deviation, by some motive which had reference to them: nor indeed, were they allowed to doubt, for in passing them, his countenance, in returning their salutations, betrayed an unseemly exultation, as if he rejoiced in some triumph. To Southennan this was even offensively manifested, and to such a degree, that it made him tremble with indignation, and answer

his Majesty's sneer with the utmost scorn that he could throw into his features.

Darnley for a moment seemed disposed to demand an explanation; he pulled up his bridle, his eyes flashing with rage: but almost instantly he turned his horse's head, and rode off in the direction he ought originally to have taken.

But although this challenge of scorn and defiance did not occupy many seconds, it yet had been sufficiently conspicuous. The attendants one and all turned their eyes fiercely on Southennan; some of them even checked their horses; but on seeing the King ride forward, they alertly followed. Something of tumult and turbulence was visibly among them; they often looked back, suddenly gathering into groups, and as quickly again spreading themselves apart.

"We shall hear of this," said Knockwhinnie.

"I think not," replied Southennan. "Had he been conscious that he durst resent it, he would have done it on the spot. But enough has passed to warn me to withdraw from Edin-

burgh. I can endure much for the Queen's sake ; but that fool's folly has been so familiar to me before his promotion, that I am unable to repress my contempt now, when he may no longer be questioned ; for Kings have not only long beaks but many claws."

Knockwhinnie made no answer. He walked on in visible perturbation ; sometimes he threw a sidelong glance at Southennan ; at others a wrathful mutter hoarsely escaped from him ; and twice or thrice in the sweep and whirl of the inward storm, he was carried several steps wildly forward, till Southennan was obliged to lay hold of him by the arm and remind him where they were, and how many eyes were around and upon them.

CHAPTER XV.

“ My mind misgives
Some consequence, still hanging on the stars.”

SHAKSPEARE.

IN the meantime, although the Queen had affected to make light of her consort's indiscretion, if an epithet so mild may be applied to conduct so base, it had deeply impressed her heart; and though she felt that the sacrifice would be severe to herself, she yet determined to remove Adelaide as quickly as possible beyond the reach of danger, but in such a manner as to prevent it from becoming a topic of remark. With this view, she had proposed the excursion to Linlithgow, where the Lady Kilburnie, the grandmother of Adelaide, resided, intending to leave her there.

The immediate pretext for the journey was the beauty of the weather; and the King had consented to it with unwonted readiness; for it accorded with the arrangements he had planned with Auchenbrae for the abduction. But the best-concerted schemes are often frustrated by simple and ordinary accidents.

The day, which had opened calm and clear, began towards noon to be overcast. The wind arose to a tempest. Travellers were driven to shelter. The King's riding party was forced home; and deluges of rain, accompanied with thunder and lightning, prohibited for that afternoon the intended journey, and afforded time to Southennan and Knockwhinnie to digest the means of better defeating the machination. But that respect for the tranquillity of the Queen which induced them to proceed more warily than either of them was naturally, under the circumstances, inclined to do, was not experienced by others who had stronger reasons to feel it.

The King, immediately on his return to the Palace, gave orders that Southennan should no longer be seen there; and, under the pretext of

allaying the jealousy by which he supposed the Queen was disturbed, he suggested to her that Adelaide should be permitted to retire from her attendance during the short interval that had to elapse before the expiry of the time appointed for her marriage.

The order and the suggestion, both arising from the displeasure with which he had tacitly menaced Southennan, and had in turn been challenged, appeared sudden and inexplicable to the Queen; but as the latter was in unison with her own wishes and intentions, she readily assented to its propriety, without expressing either surprise at the haste, or asking explanation of the motive.

Meanwhile, Hughoc had not been idle; his imagination had pretty well filled up with specious probabilities the hiatus in his information respecting the designs of Auchenbrae, and the co-operation of Rough Tam; and during the storm, when all had been compelled to seek shelter, he contrived to find his refuge in the carrier's quarters, the house which the latter commonly frequented. Some degree of ac-

quaintanceship having been already established between them by their meeting on the preceding evening, this seeming accident enabled him to cultivate it into more intimacy; for Tam, as his nickname implied, was a noisy, outspoken, rattling fellow; intrepid, adroit, and in his best humour and spirits when he had a hazardous adventure in hand, and possessed, if the expression may be allowed, a natural affinity to the peculiar qualities for which Hughoc, now grown a smart and shrewd lad, was distinguished among the young men of his own grade.

As they sat conversing together until the rain abated, Tam was too full of his enterprise to withstand the delight of letting his new companion know how well he was thought of by his superiors. Hughoc, who was naturally more cautious, carefully abstained from talking of himself; but he drew him on with the help of the ale before them, into further disclosures, until he had acquired with his previous knowledge and suspicions, a tolerably distinct conception of the whole plot, which, however, the unexpected determination of the Queen to visit Linlithgow had for that day disconcerted.

After having acquired this information, Hughoc, on rejoining his master, related the particulars of what had passed, and also his persuasion, that although a brief suspension of the design had taken place, the earliest opportunity would undoubtedly be seized to carry it into effect. Thus, after maturely considering every thing, it appeared to Southennan that no other option was left to secure the safety of Adelaide, but to follow the advice of Rizzio, by carrying her out of the kingdom, either to England or to France; and the urgency of the case scarcely admitted of time for the necessary preparations.

This unhappy and perplexing state of things, was ill calculated to appease the energy of that antipathy which Darnley had provoked in the bosom of our hero, who felt that to be forced to leave his native land on account of the criminal intents, too openly pursued against the honour of his bride, was a tyranny of the most hateful kind. It exasperated his dislike, which had been constantly increasing, until it partook of enmity inflamed with rage, and betrayed him often, when speaking to others of the King, into

expressions of contempt and anger at variance with the habitual prudence and equanimity of his character.

With Knockwhinnie the same cause produced a different effect; although from his temerity, it was rather to have been expected that it would have goaded him into a fiercer degree of resentment.

With his wonted rashness in decision, he concluded that there was no alternative but only to leave the country, and accordingly he began, without reference to what Southennan might determine, to prepare for departing with Adelaide.

The troubles of the lovers were thus augmented; all things seemed to work together against them, insomuch that their union appeared to themselves as the hope of a dream destined never to be realized. A weariness of spirit fell upon them both, and Southennan, who had loved so long and fervently, began at times to yield to discouraging anticipations. This despondency was deepened by an incident, which though in itself trivial, was yet calculated, by the mood

into which so many vexations had thrown him, to multiply his anxieties.

Among others to whom Knockwhinnie complained in confidence of Darnley's libertine stratagems against his daughter, was the Earl of Morton, whose respect for the King was neither strong nor sincere, and whose jealousy of Rizzio's influence with the Queen had continued to quicken from the first moment that he suspected she held a correspondence by him with the princes in the papal interest.

With considerable natural sagacity, Morton, like many better men connected with affairs of government, was too apt to ascribe the conduct of others to craftier motives and more sinister intentions, than men of far less integrity would have done. Bred up for public employments, it had been early instilled in him to estimate those with whom he might have occasion to deal, by a suspicious rule; and thus, alike by disposition, habit, and principle, he invidiously judged of mankind. It could not, however, be said that he did injustice to individuals; for with him the application of the rule was uni-

versal; but, by allowing no exceptions, he often discovered himself in error when he thought mistake was least likely to occur; and so it happened in the present instance. For after listening to the grievance of which his old friend Knockwhinnie complained, he conjectured that Darnley was instigated and assisted by Rizzio. Distrustful of both, it may be said hating them alike, he saw the machination through the coloured and distorting medium of his own passion and prejudice, as a combination of circumstances contrived by the Italian to magnify his merit in the eyes of the King; and, reasoning upon that misconception, he involved the fortunes of the lovers with greater difficulties.

CHAPTER XVI.

“Auspicious aspect ! fateful in conjunction,
At length the mighty three corradiate.”

SCHILLER.

AFTER Knockwhinnie had explained to the Earl of Morton the different occasions of Darnley's unjustifiable declarations of attachment to Adelaide, and the discoveries which had been made of his designs, the Earl remained some time ruminating, with his head drooping over his breast, and his fore-finger on his upper lip, as if untying to himself the knot of some doubtful question ; at last he said,

“It's as plain to me as a pikestaff, Knockwhinnie, that this corky-headed lad, Darnley, whom the Queen in her fainness has sae rashly lifted up to sit beside her, will prove not only a thorn in the flesh to herself, but a knife in the

thrapple o' Scotland. Puir auld ewie, is she ay to be sprawling on her back in the ditch, wi' her feet caught in a tether. But, Knockwhinnie, I'll see to the bottom o' this. That yellow loon, Dauvit Richie, has a finger in the pie, I could wager my right neive on t; and if the waur come to the waur, we maun cow him; for he makes himsel' sae necessary to the King's follies, that he's little short o' being the King himsel', what between the power it gies him, and the use he makes o' the flatteries and fleetchings wherewith he beglammours her Majesty's naturally gleg understanding."

"I rather suspect, my lord," replied Knockwhinnie, "that in this matter Rizzio has no part. My old enemy Auchenbrae seems to be the prime agent."

"It's little ye ken about the wily Italian. Do ye think he is such a novice in plots and stratagems as to let himsel' be seen? Na, na, he works the wires, and the world sees only the louping puppets, that jig and reel as he jerks. But I'll go this minute to him, the wuddy bird; he has been oer lang among us; and this



matter, weel handlet, may physic the land o' him."

Accordingly, Morton went at once to Rizzio, whom he found in some degree of agitation, in consequence of the King having peevishly accused him of entertaining a disloyal partiality for Southennan, to the frustration of his hopes with Adelaide. The accusation being unfounded, Rizzio defended himself, which provoked the heady and intemperate Darnley; who, at all times ready to indulge his spleen and resentment, parted from him with a determination to require his dismissal from the Queen's service.

It was, however, only in the word that the Italian was innocent; for he had watched the progress of the King's infidelity with eagerness, and anticipated by the haste and recklessness with which it was pursued, that it could not be much longer concealed from her Majesty; for he was not aware that she already had heard of it. His interest in the business had reference only to his own views; he certainly had no wish that Adelaide should become a victim, while he thought that by

her such a rupture might be effected between the Queen and her consort, as would materially strengthen his ascendancy. No visit could, therefore, be more inauspicious than the Earl of Morton's, nor more likely to engender misunderstandings; indeed the first sentence which he uttered was calculated to mislead Rizzio.

“ So ! ” said the Earl, with his usual jocular abruptness, as he entered, “ The Signor's at his auld trade, plotting. I think the very blood o' you Italians has a venom in it, that makes conspiracies as natural to you as apples and pears to fruitful trees. What the deil, Dauvit, is this story about your being a conjoint Pandarus for the King against the Queen's bonny Mam'selle. I redde ye tak tent o' your head, or her father will set it on your loof like a turnip on a trencher. But to speak solidly, and to the purpose, Dauvit, we Scotch folk are a moral people, and sic gallantings are no to be thole't: if ye will gallant, my man, ye'se no gallant here.”

“ My Lord,” replied Rizzio, astonished at this address, and partly ascribing it to what had

passed with the King, "I am myself unable to understand in what it is I have offended; and it is not befitting that I should submit to be told that I am less honest in my trusts than other men."

"Hoity toity, hoity toity, here's pride! Dauvit, if ye're no pleased wi' us we can spare you."

"I cannot," replied Rizzio, bridling his passion, "suppose that my Lord means to insult me. I complained not, nor have I cause. In this country I have been honoured with great trusts; I have in them been as faithful, and that's no brag, as my predecessors."

"Oh, we a' ken Dauvit, that ye're very clever; but its no for the like o' you to speak wi' sic a controversial spirit to the lords and nobility of Scotland."

Rizzio, with his natural perspicacity and discernment, saw that they were somehow at cross purposes, and imposing a considerable restraint upon himself, he said,

"My Lord, I fear we are both under some mistake. May I ask the object of this visit? it seems necessary to bring us back to business."

“Weel,” replied the Earl, “there’s something like sense in that; and I’ll no be wanting in plainness. Ken ye anything about this fasherie that the King has caused anent Southennan’s bride?”

“I know not,” said Rizzio, drily, somewhat indeed proudly; “that I should undertake to answer the question farther than to say, I of my own knowledge know nothing; but as the matter touches His Majesty’s honour and the Queen’s happiness, I will deal frankly.”

“I see,” said Morton, affecting a familiar smile, “that thou’st no’ without judgment; but thou’st o’ a hasty temper, Dauvit.”

Rizzio was obliged to smile; for this was certainly not his fault, but pretty much that of the Earl, and he replied,

“It is, I suspect, not without truth that the King’s conduct towards the daughter of Knockwhinnie has not been governed by that respect which is due to the Queen; but it is a business in which I do think my assistance would be asked;” and he added with a degree of firmness that was almost stern, “Nor do I think there is

one in all the Court who would venture seriously to impute to me such an oblivion of the favours I have received from her Majesty, as to say I would be assisting in such a work !”

The Earl felt the reproach, and changed colour ; his eyes sparkled, and according to a habit which he had when angry, he set his teeth fiercely on edge, and spoke thickly through them.

“ My lad,” said he, “ take tent. Be less upsetting, and think o’ your ain station when ye’re permitted to discourse wi’ me.”

“ I shall always think of my duty ; and not the least is to uphold myself against unmerited reproof.”

“ The fallow’s gaun aff at the head,” cried the Earl, “ he’s forgetting himself. But since ye say that ye hae nae hand in this concern o’ Knockwhinnie’s daughter, tho’ I dinna believe you——”

“ My Lord ! if the Earl of Morton forgets his own dignity, he need be none surprised that I do so too, while I recollect my own. Has my Lord any farther business with me at this time ?”

The astonishment of Morton at the bold equality assumed in these few words exceeded description. He absolutely glared on the Italian, half drew his sword, and after several attempts to give utterance to his rage, was at last able only to cry with a hideous hoarseness,

“Ye ’ll repent this.”

Rizzio looked at him with cool contempt, and replied,

“I know it, my Lord.”

The rage of Morton became ungovernable; he stamped with such vehemence that he made the house ring, and brought in the Lord Ruthven, who was standing in the anti-chamber, and who had overheard the high tone in which the Earl expressed himself. He inquired what was the matter, and Morton exclaimed against the insolence of Rizzio, who listened to his rhapsody with a countenance expressive of the most unmitigated scorn. Ruthven also listened, and turning to Rizzio, who was with him no favourite, admonished him of the impropriety of his arrogance, not only to the Earl but towards many others of the nobility. The answer he received was brief.

“ When others forget me, I remember myself.”

Ruthven made no answer; but putting his arm into that of Morton, they left the apartment together. Ruthven, in looking back as he went out, seemed to Rizzio to have a wild and momentary resemblance to the appearance of Châtelard when he uttered his dismal prediction.

CHAPTER XVII.

“ Ye powers of aidance, show me such a way
As I am capable of going.

THE PICCOLOMINI.

WHEN perplexities overtake the fortunes of men, a corresponding confusion troubles their minds. It was the case with Southennan; for although he had with reluctance acknowledged that the most judicious measure he could adopt, to secure his own happiness and the honour of his bride, was to leave Scotland with her rather than to attempt to wage an unequal controversy with the King, yet the intention could not be carried into effect without more time and preparation than the exigency of the occasion admitted. In this crisis the impetuosity of Knockwhinnie was better than his prudence. He

determined at once to remove Adelaide from Holyrood House, and to let the explanation of his conduct come after, as circumstances might suggest or point out. Thus it happened that, after some brief explanation with Adelaide of the necessity, he told her to be ready to go with him as soon as the King and Queen set out for Linlithgow in the morning; the state of the weather having, that afternoon, obliged them to postpone the excursion.

In the mean time Southennan, though much of the same mind, perceived that the removal of Adelaide would have a serious effect on the Queen's tranquillity, as it could not but apprise her that the profligacy of Darnley was considered truly dangerous. Under the influence of this delicate sentiment he became irresolute, and increased his embarrassments by his indecision. Perhaps he had but a choice of evils; at least, while he was balancing motives, his adversaries were acting from impulses. Altogether the situation of Southennan, while it required promptitude and determination, made it greatly difficult to determine what would be

his proper course. But an incident occurred which soon disentangled him from his delicacy and embarrassment.

Disappointed of the enjoyment which the Queen had anticipated from the excursion, she had directed her customary domestic circle to be assembled in the evening; and not being aware that Southennan was forbid the Palace, she noticed his absence. It attracted, however, in no particular degree her observation, especially as an excuse was made for the absence of Adelaide also. She imagined the lovers were engaged in their own affairs, and she spoke playfully of them to Rizzio, who chanced to be standing near her, a freedom he often took, to the great displeasure of the nobility.

Whether any communication had been made to the King by the Earl of Morton, of the conversation which had passed between him and Rizzio, or whether Darnley, at the moment, was actuated by the impulse of his own spleen, may be disputed—but at the moment when Rizzio was replying to the gaiety with which the Queen was remarking on the absence of Southennan

and Adelaide, his Majesty, quitting the Earl, with whom he was engaged, came angrily up to Rizzio, and taking him hastily by the arm, drew him from the Queen's side with a degree of rudeness which excited universal attention. The Queen was exceedingly indignant; but, without making any remark, she summoned Rizzio to come back. The effect of this little contrariety checked the wonted hilarity of the company; and Mary herself, in evident chagrin, left her party earlier than usual. Darnley was sensible that he had fallen into some indecorum; and, as if the blemish on good manners could be lessened by perseverance in the same ill-humour, he appeared moody and sullen, and kept the guests, without entertainment, long after the Queen had retired; for the etiquette of the Court did not permit them to withdraw while he remained.

In the meanwhile Auchenbrae had been renewing his arrangements with his worthy compeer, Rough Tam, to carry into effect their schemes for conveying Adelaide away, the weather and the postponement of the visit of the Court

to Linlithgow having marred their previous arrangements. Confident in the protection of the King, they were not very scrupulous as to the means of executing their design. They both thought that the sooner they could carry it into effect, they would give his Majesty the greater satisfaction; and having been apprised, after the Queen's party broke up, that Adelaide had not been there, they determined to try if they could not, by some stratagem, draw her from the Palace by the pretext of a message from her father. Auchenbrae could not himself be the bearer of the message, and he did not deem his colleague sufficiently smooth for the office. In consulting about finding some fit person, Rough Tam recollected his new acquaintance Hughoc, and described him as qualified for the task, if he could be found and would undertake it.

Auchenbrae, not suspecting that he alluded to Southennan's man, readily adopted the suggestion, and Tam went straight to the Unicorn, where Hughoc nightly attended his master at supper, to engage him. The communication was soon made, and adroitly undertaken; but

Hughoc made an excuse that he must previously get leave from his master, before he could desert his attendance.

“Wha’s he?” said Rough Tam.

“Oh! a very decent man,” replied Hughoc; “Cornylees o’ that Ilk, there’s no’ a blither Laird in a’ the West.”

It was then arranged that Hughoc should proceed to the Palace, with a message to Adelaide, as from her father, requesting to see her, as he had been suddenly taken ill, and that Rough Tam should accompany him; while Auchenbrae, with suitable men and horse, should be ready to meet them at the head of Leith Wynd, near the Netherbow.

Hughoc immediately sought his master, told him of this fortunate accident; and, while he proceeded with his message to the Palace, Southennan went in quest of Knockwhinnie and assistance, to mar the stratagem.

On reaching Holyrood, Hughoc, leaving Rough Tam at the portal, went into the court; and by the assistance of one of the Queen’s servants, with whom he had scraped some ac-

quaintance, was conducted to Adelaide's apartment, where he found her, busily engaged with her father in making preparations for removing her that night.

Hughoc, being known to them both, soon explained his errand, as well as the object it was intended to answer; and with that address in which he was daily becoming more adroit, he suggested that the lady should come with him, and that her father should follow at a short distance, assuring them that they would be met by his master before reaching the place where Auchenbrae was to be in waiting. Adelaide hastily wrapped herself in her mantle; and, under the protection of Rough Tam and Hughoc, her father following at a distance, hastened towards the city.

When they had reached about half way up the Cannongate, Southennan suddenly appeared from the mouth of a wynd, and, without speaking, conveyed Adelaide into it, followed by Knockwhinnie and Hughoc, while the men he had with him prevented Rough Tam from entering.

CHAPTER XVIII.

“ A curse, a threefold curse upon this journey.”

SCHILLER.

IN the morning, the weather being again fair, a numerous party of ladies and gentlemen on horseback, assembled in front of the Palace, to ride with the court to Linlithgow. The Queen was already mounted, when Auchenbrae made his appearance; and the King, who had his foot in the stirrup, on seeing him coming, immediately gave the bridle to a groom, and moved several paces forward to meet him.

The countenance of Auchenbrae was confused and clouded: instead of advancing straight towards his Majesty, he slunk aside, until he had passed behind a tower, which intercepted him from the view of the cavalcade. Darnley, with his constitutional impetuosity and disregard of

decorum, called to him aloud, but Auchenbrae only halted, and waited his approach.

“ Well,” cried the King, “ good news I bope ? ”

Auchenbrae shook his head ; and then said,

“ We have been disappointed this time. It will, however, be as well that your Majesty proceed on your journey, and take no notice of what has happened.”

“ Disappointed ; how so ? ” exclaimed the King, chagrined and hastily.

Auchenbrae then briefly related what had taken place, as it had been reported by Rough Tam.

“ How came he to trust so much to a stranger ? know you aught of the knave ? ”

“ I can but guess now.”

“ What is he ? ” cried Darnley, his choler rising.

“ One of Southennan’s servants.”

“ How ! one of his ! ”

“ Ill luck would even have it so,” replied Auchenbrae, with unaffected humility ; for he was fully sensible of the incautious manner in

which Hughoc had been engaged in the business.

“ And where is Adelaide?” cried Darnley, his anger mounting beyond control.

“ With Southennan, as I fear, please your Majesty.”

“ Please! quotha! Is she in Edinburgh? Find out where she is—I will not ride till she is found.”

“ I beseech your Majesty to pass it by for the présent; leave the business to me; all will yet go well: it should not be stirred in so publicly.”

At this moment the Queen turned her palfrey, and coming forward, gaily chided Darnley for his ungallant neglect; but he answered her so roughly, that she became pale, and rejoined the company in irrepressible emotion. He saw his error; and bidding Auchenbrae persevere, returned to his horse, but before mounting, after having taken the bridle, he went to the Queen, and in his best manner attempted to palliate his impropriety as an inadvertency. Mary smiled, and accepted the apology on behalf of

the ladies; but it was observed that a melancholy shade, from that time, settled on her beauty, which never brightened to its original lustre again.

The cheerfulness, however, of the sunny morning air, and the sympathetic hilarity of so numerous a company, all determined to enjoy and contribute to pleasure; seemed to dissipate the cloud that had overcast her natural gaiety; Darnley, too, forgot his guilty chagrin, and a holiday spirit, in its playfulness, came twinkling its wings and wantoning among them, as they spread and scattered themselves over the open fields, like knots and groups of flowers in a parterre. But the waywardness of the King's temper soon betrayed its inconsistency, and he began to complain in a querulous humour of the journey, wondering why he consented to it.

The inconstancy of our Scottish climate helped to increase his dissatisfaction. Before they had proceeded five miles to the westward, the wind began to rise, and here and there dark masses of vapour suddenly lowered in the sky. In them there was nothing to justify any

apprehension of a storm, but they afforded a pretext to express discontent; and it so happened that once or twice, when the Queen expressed her confidence in the aspect of the weather, Darnley replied to her peevishly; sometimes testily; and on one occasion, with such petulance, that she looked at him with astonishment, and enquired what molested him. His answer was still ruder; she, however, made no reply, but rode slowly forward with an aspect of thoughtful sadness, which touched with compassion those who observed it.

Upon Darnley, her visible distress had a different effect. Instead of mitigating his ill-humour, and inducing him to repress his discontent, it only irritated both. Mary herself, though of a generous temperament, was also quick, and, when unjustly excited, wilful, somewhat capricious, and the deference to which she had, from infancy, been accustomed, made restraint upon her temper less easily endured than might, from her free good-nature, have been expected. But the patience with which she bore Darnley's querulousness, excited uni-

versal admiration, while it stung her to resentment. At last her spirit, being worn out with his fretfulness, she said, with that loftiness of mien which she could so well assume, that if he forgot himself and what was due to her, she would ride no further.

As this was the first time she had ever evinced toward him anything like a determination to hold her mind independent, he was startled at the accent and at the manner of her address, but his surprise lasted only for an instant. His face flushed with anger, his eyes sparkled, and forgetful of all courtesy, he roughly demanded to know why she so spoke to him. To this rudeness she made no answer, but turned her horse's head, and rode, attended by the greater part of the company, to Dalmahoy, then inhabited by the mother of the Earl of Morton, an aged lady, distinguished for the strict propriety of her manners, and for uncommon fortitude and energy of character.

The appearance of the Queen, on reaching the gate, required no explanation to account for the suddenness of the visit. Every feature

indicated a sense of suffering and affliction; so that when she alighted, and requested to be shown into a chamber, the venerable Dowager saw she was indeed in need of repose.

The amazement of Darnley, at her decision, was inconceivable, especially when he found himself deserted by several of the courtiers, whom he reckoned among his particular friends. He pulled up his bridle, and without turning his horse's head, looked round, leaning on the back of the saddle, as if he expected, that by not following, the Queen would return; and his humiliation was extreme, when he saw her, with all her ladies, disappear behind a rising ground.

His first feeling was anger, and by his gestures, he seemed inclined to gallop after her; in a moment, however, observing one of the young lords who was of the party smiling, he briskly checked himself, and affected to make light of the matter. It was only for a moment: his passion rallied; he expressed himself with vehemence, and finally clapping spurs to his horse, never drew bridle until he reached the portal of Holyrood-House.

His return, and the sudden report of the Queen's indisposition, excited a great sensation in Edinburgh. A crowd assembled round the Palace, through the midst of which one of the Queen's servants came riding in haste; it was understood to command Rizzio and some of the Lords of the Council to attend her Majesty.

This incident, together with a rumour that began to spread from the servants of those who had returned with the King, as to the true nature of the Queen's illness, tended to excite the popular feeling against Rizzio; for like all such tales, the occurrence was soon exaggerated into a plausible and very matter-of-fact-like story, especially when repeated in connexion with the manner in which the King had snatched Rizzio from the Queen's side the preceding evening; and, in consequence, without tumult, a considerable commotion arose among the populace, who vented their displeasure in terms equally discreditable to both their Majesties.

CHAPTER XIX.

“Thou basest thing, avoid, hence from my sight?”

SHAKSPEARE.

SOUTHENNAN and Knockwhinnie conveyed Adelaide, early in the morning after her rescue from the machination of Auchenbrae, to the residence of the Lady Kilburnie, in Linlithgow, with the intention of celebrating the marriage there, as soon as the mother of Southennan could be present at the ceremony. In the meantime, Auchenbrae and his rough compeer had discovered the route they had taken; and the former, on hearing of the King's return to Holyrood-house, went to inform him, and to receive his further instructions.

He found his Majesty sitting sullenly alone in his closet, ruminating on the occurrence of the morning. It had taught him a lesson which

even his folly could not prevent him from feeling. Often as he had before repined at the superior deference which the nobility and members of the Court paid to the Queen, the singular manner in which they had deserted him on the first frown of her displeasure, convinced him that all their professions of reverence and attachment, really were but as ornaments covering a very slender tie. He palliated his own behaviour in such a manner to himself, that while he could not but acknowledge he was in some degree to blame, he thought the manner in which the Queen had acted was unnecessarily calculated to injure him with the country, and in consequence he nourished resentment against her, far beyond the equity of the occasion. He could not, however, disguise that he had brought himself into this dilemma by the indiscretion with which he had so rashly declared his criminal affection for Adelaide; and this reflection made the appearance of Auchenbrae at that particular time disagreeable, almost obnoxious.

“What want you?” he exclaimed, as Auchenbrae was ushered in; looking at him from

beneath his brows, and askance over his shoulder. A reception so unexpected and so different from the familiarity to which he had been accustomed, transfixed Auchenbrae to the spot for the space of a minute, and until the King again looking up, demanded, in a still more emphatic tone,

“What want you, I say?”

The answer was hesitatingly delivered: such unwonted severity being altogether strange, and, as Auchenbrae thought, without cause.

“I have come to inform your Majesty that Knockwhinnie and his daughter, with Southennan, have this morning at day-light fled to Linlithgow.”

“What have I to do with that? Come when I am in another humour. I hate their very names! Would they were all sunk in the sea!”

“Is it not then your Majesty’s pleasure that they should be pursued? It is supposed their intention is to make for England.”

“What then?” exclaimed Darnley.

“Your Majesty might direct their detention before they can cross the borders.”

“How! mean you in the Queen’s name? for I have neither power nor dominion in Scotland. But I will have nothing further to do with it; let them go!”

Auchenbrae was too well acquainted with the vacillations of Darnley to act on such a hasty bidding. He knew when the spleen of the moment, from whatever cause arising, was over, that he would be blamed if he obeyed orders dictated in the precipitancy of passion; so that while moving to retire, he inquired with more than his usual pliancy,

“When will your Majesty be pleased that I should come again?”

“Never!”

“I hope it is not to be so,” said Auchenbrae, with a more familiar accent. But the King at once put an end to the interview, by saying, angrily,

“Begone! I will send when you are wanted!”

As Auchenbrae retired, the page in attendance informed the King of the messenger who had come for Rizzio and the Lords of the Council, whom the Queen had summoned. The intelli-

gence struck him as something extraordinary and formidable; his complexion faded, and with a tremulous voice and averted eye he desired the page to bid Rizzio come to him; and he rose from his seat, and walked several times with a disturbed air across the room. In this state the Italian found him, and, on entering, paused, expecting some violent burst of passion; but the reverse was the case. Darnley regarded him for a moment in silence, and, with something of diffidence and doubt in his appearance, said,

“So, her Majesty requires you and the Council to attend her at Dalmahoy; know you the purpose?”

Rizzio, who was in full self-possession, replied, with the respectfulness with which he always addressed the King,

“I am ignorant of any special business that can require such solemn consideration, unless”—and he looked gravely—“unless it be some matter touching her own comfort.”

This was said in total ignorance of the disagreement which had taken place, and under an

impression that her Majesty felt herself seriously unwell. But it had the effect of alarming Darnley, who, supposing the Italian acquainted with their quarrel, rejoined,

“If that be all, I should think the journey might be postponed; for she is not obdurate in her anger.”

The Italian started, perceiving that something had occurred between their Majesties; and, although in his heart not dissatisfied, he affected much concern, and with an eager timidity expressed his sorrow that any accident had occurred to discompose the Queen.

“She is self-willed, and can abide no control,” said Darnley; “and when she has once given an opinion, all the saints and apostles will not turn her. But go; and by your judicious management I doubt not she will see her error.”

“Then,” replied Rizzio, “it has been a matter of no moment.”

“Oh!” replied Darnley, affecting to laugh, “a thing of mere household thrift, a ravelling of yarn, vexatious, but not ruinous.”

Rizzio reflected before he made any reply,

and then said, with his characteristic plausibility,

“In that case, the remedy will come better from your Majesty. I dare not presume to offer any opinion on a matter so delicate.”

“Don’t say so. Perhaps, had you interposed less, there would have been no occasion.”

There was verbal injustice in this charge. Rizzio had foreseen that Darnley himself would soon exhaust the Queen’s affection, and abstained with equal solicitude and skill from doing anything to promote a difference which was so inevitable. There was thus no affectation when he replied,

“I am traduced by those who venture to say so; for in all things I have been a true and faithful servant, who better knew his duty than to make an ungrateful return for the patronage he has enjoyed.”

“I do not question, Rizzio, that you have been faithful to the Queen.”

“Nor have I, Sire, been lacking in aught of my duty to your Majesty.”

“You grow bold,” said Darnley, scarcely

aware of his words ; “ but presume not on the mischance of this day.”

“ With permission,” replied the Italian, “ I will retire, for I cannot vindicate myself against factless imaginations. I am innocent; but how may that be proven against suspicion which condescends on no circumstance? Nor may I unblamed hold controversy with your Majesty.”

CHAPTER XX.

“ As the Sun

Ere it is risen, sometimes paints its image
In the atmosphere, so often do the spirits
Of great events stride on before the events,
And in to-day already walks to-morrow.”

THE DEATH OF WALLENSTEIN.

AMONG others summoned, as a matter of course, to attend the Council, were the Earl of Morton and the Lord Ruthven, neither of whom were acquainted with the King's return to Holyrood, until the order to attend her Majesty was delivered to them. Thus it happened that instead of proceeding direct to Dalmahoy, they severally went to the palace, to ascertain from the King himself what had taken place, and they both met at the door of his closet just as Rizzio was coming out.

A breach between the Italian and them had for some time been widening. They lost no opportunity of convincing him how small a space he occupied in their esteem, nor was he shy of retaliating their contumely with scorn. At that moment he was in no humour to repress his feelings toward them, for he was chafed more by the manner of Darnley than by any thing he had said to him; and he foresaw that some decided result, which would have an immediate and material effect on the King's condition, and on his own, would probably result from the deliberations of the Council.

As a matter of ordinary etiquette and courtesy, he stood back to allow them to pass, and bowed with unusual formality as they proceeded forward, evidently not intending to speak to him. Morton, however, changed his mind as he was about to enter the closet, and turning round said, with his customary freedom,

“Dauvit, what's the straemash between their Majesties? Has the Queen been warming his lugs? For if a' tales be true, she has had some reason.”

Rizzio replied, drily, that he had no information on the subject.

“Hech man,” said the Earl, sarcastically; “ye needna be sae costive in your speech, Dauvit: but I can see that ye’re counting on making profit to yoursel o’ it.”

“I am much indebted to my Lord for the good opinion he entertains of me.”

“Thou’s no blate,” replied Morton; “and nae doubt, in season, thou’ll get thy reward for being aye sae ready to fish in troubled water.”

The Lord Ruthven, a tall, gaunt, cadaverous figure, took no part in the dialogue, but stood scowling upon Rizzio, waiting until Morton had finished, when he reminded him that their time was running out.

“That’s true; I was forgetting mysel’ wi’ this fallow. Dauvit——”

“What is my Lord’s pleasure?”

“Thou may gang about thy business till a mair convenient season.” And, laughing at his self-imagined joke, walked into the closet, leaving Rizzio burning with wrath at the mannerless derision with which he was so wantonly treated.

“ This,” said he to himself, “ cannot be much longer endured : it must come or be brought to some issue soon—a bloody issue. They see the King’s weakness, and they perceive the confidence her Majesty has in me. What can be their present drift ? Can they wish to have the management of the State, by making the weak Prince their instrument ? But, whatever their designs and intents may be, I stand in the way. Yes, Chatelard, the time is coming ; and let it. I shall not change a jot, for no worse can come than thy prediction.”

His suspicions of the intention of Morton were not altogether groundless. Ruthven was of a different description : he was a plain straight-forward character, little likely to be deterred from the execution of any purpose by moral considerations. On the contrary, he had a sort of constitutional enjoyment in undertakings of difficulty and danger, especially if mixed up with mystery. He was indeed a character peculiar almost to that age ; not that such characters are ever extinct, though the influence of more temperate times places them, as it were,

in abeyance. Ruthven was naturally cruel, and had a grim gratification in the act of guilt; but he had also a wild principle, which he himself mistook for justice. He would embark in no enterprize which, according to this principle, was not necessary or equitable. He did not do evil from any gratuitous delight in it as evil, but he scrupled not to take a part in transactions which law could not sanction, and religion condemned. He was, therefore, a ready weapon to those who could convince his shallow understanding of the expediency of any undertaking, whether for public good, or private revenge.

On entering the closet they found Darnley in the state we have already described, discontented with himself and with every other thing. He laid the blame of his discomfort on Rizzio, by observing to Morton that the Italian's insolence was becoming so intolerable that it ought to be abated.

“Your Majesty,” replied the Earl, “has made a very judicious observe; but wha will bell the cat, unless ye take the business in hand your royal self.”

“That would be to no purpose,” replied Darnley; “for were I to speak of it to the Queen, she would immediately suspect that I was interfering with her government.”

“I hope and trust,” said Morton, “she’s no sae witless; for we must get rid o’ him, and better by fair than foul means. If her Majesty winna put her shoulder to the wheel, she may just stand on the road-side, a looker-on, till the wark’s done. I will this very day, at the Council-board, bring the matter up; for really the fallow dishes at us a’, high and low, wise and wanton, wi’ the horns o’ the bull o’ Bashan. He’s no to be suffered. Didna ye see, my Lord Ruthven, in what an unreverent manner he held up his snout to me?”

“Fortunately,” said Lord Ruthven, “I have never had much to do with him; but it’s a new thing in the kingdom of Scotland, to see a foreigner ruling and reigning so contumaciously; and snubbing the oldest and the boldest Barons of the realm, as if they were no better than his own vassals.”

“Na, for that,” replied Morton, “he would

be ceevil to them, if they were sae. But I'm glad, my Lord Ruthven, ye hae been a witness to what I hae borne at his hands; and had I run him through the body, I'm sure ye never could hae said, wi' a clear conscience, that it was ill did ye. But we'll hae some discourse to the purpose, in our way to Dalmahoy; and when we come back, we'll see what his Majesty may then in his wisdom advise us to do. In the meantime, what would your Majesty be pleased that we should say to the Queen anent this rugging and riving that has happened between your Majesty and her? I hope it's no true that she met an accidence from your niece that has done great damage to her sight; for I see nae signs o' her ten commandments being inflicted on your cheeks?"

Darnley laughed at the Earl's jocularly, well knowing that the story of a fight was his own invention at the moment.

"Weel," continued Morton, "if things did na' come to sic an extremity, it's a' the decenter; but what would ye advise us to tell her Majesty to do, as nae doubt we are sent for on that purpose?"

“Perhaps,” said Darnley, from his knowledge of her fluctuating temper, with more sagacity than was expected from him, “before you reach Dalmahoy, the wind may have shifted : but blow how it may, my wish is for quietness and peace ; and I know nothing which should prevent all the breach that has yet taken place from being made up.”

“That’s very sensible,” said Morton.

“Very much so, indeed,” said Ruthven.

“And,” added Morton, “our endeavour shall neither be wanting nor slack. But hae ye nae gew-gaw or bonnie-wee naething wi’ a whistle in the tail o’t, that ye could send to her as a love-token and peace-offering ?”

The King declared that he had nothing.

“Weel then,” replied the Earl, “ye had better come wi’ us yoursel’, for delays are dangerous, and naeboddy can tell what hemp-seed may be sown between you and our Sovereign Leddly, if ye bide o’er lang apart.”

Ruthven seconded the proposition, observing, that if the Italian was in any way to blame for the misunderstanding that had taken place, it

would be as well to have the countenance of the King at the Council-board, especially as something must be done to cleanse the Council of Rizzio's presence.

“ It is a strange thing,” continued he, “ that an adventurer of his degree should have the upper-hand in the government of an ancient State, ruling the Sovereign, and heeding neither the wise nor the great of the land. It betrays a sad decay of our old Scottish independence to let such things be. For my part, if three honest men can be found to back me, I'll not be the last to allow the grievance to remain without making some attempt for a riddance.”

CHAPTER XXI.

“ No honours were omitted,
No outward courtesy.”——

SCHILLER.

THE lady of Dalmahoy soon perceived that the Queen was more agitated than indisposed; and she learnt with sorrow from the ladies of her suite something of the querulousness she had endured from the King. The character of Darnley was indeed by this time correctly estimated, not only by those within his own immediate sphere and circle, but by the public in general, and an anxious sympathy for the Queen's infelicitous marriage was beginning to spread throughout the country.

When her Majesty had sometime indulged her vexation at having been made such an object of public remark, she desired to see her

venerable hostess, for she had heard of her great prudence and domestic virtues.

The Dowager Countess of Morton was far advanced in life, precise and formal. She belonged to times and fashions which had passed away, and regarded as a deplorable lapse from courtly manners, the easy elegance which had been first introduced into Scotland by the mother of Mary, and the cultivation of which Mary herself, both by example and precept, studiously encouraged. But beneath these light prejudices she possessed a lofty and masculine mind. To great discernment of character she united decision, and a wisdom adequate for the dominion of a kingdom. In her appearance she was stately and ceremonious, affecting unusual pomp in her apparel, and on all occasions requiring a strict observance of those rules which had in the past age been deemed essential to high breeding.

After having received the Queen into her castle, she considered herself as the servant of her Majesty, and did not obtrude into her presence until her attendance was required; but

foreseeing that she might soon be summoned, she dressed herself in her richest paraphernalia, to be in readiness to obey. Her head, according to the fashion of Queen Margaret's age, was built up to a towering altitude, and studded in the midst of laces and bows of curiously wrought cambric, with knobs and carbuncles of jewellery. She wore enormous ear-rings of emerald or green glass, wrought into imitations of clusters of grapes; and her tall and aged neck was hooped with golden bands and amber beads and Italian pearls of great magnitude. Her robe was of the richest purple velvet, speckled with gold, and adorned with curiously flowing trimmings of lace, which were also spangled. Her petticoat, without folds or drapery, was a creaseless cone of crimson satin, richly embroidered with peonies, tulips, and roses, and other splendid flowers of equal brilliancy, magnitude, and delicacy, and the bottom was adorned with an affluent flounce of rich needle-work, representing birds, butterflies, and other gaudy insects. Her fingers were encrusted with rings of precious stones, more eminent for their variety than

their value; and she led by a ribbon an Italian greyhound, the admiration of all the country side. Her train was supported by a little old decrepid woman, fantastically dressed, leaning on a staff, crowned with an ivory ball, on the top of which stood a dove with expanded wings, bearing an olive-branch in its bill.

When the old lady, preceded by two officers of her household, the seneschal and the warder of the castle, entered the apartment where the Queen was seated, such unexpected magnificence so surprised her Majesty that she involuntary rose to receive her, and with unaffected sentiment did homage to the embodied genius of the olden time. It was, however, but for a moment, and Mary would have soon yielded to the effect of the second survey, had she not perceived how much the decorum of form and solemnity entered into the Dowager's conceptions of the proprieties of rank and dignity.

Assuming as much ceremony as the wonted gaiety of her nature would permit, Mary requested the Countess to be seated, and that she would desire her attendants to withdraw, as she

wished for the benefit of her advice in private. The old lady gently waved her hand, and the seneschal and warder retired backward with lowly reverences. The aged Elspeth, her train-bearer, followed; but finding the attempt to leave the room backwards inconvenient, she turned round, and was moving off; her stately mistress, however, reminded her that the Queen's Majesty was present, and she then sidled to the door.

The Queen and the Countess were thus left alone. The spirits of Mary again sank, till the presence of the Countess reminded her of the purpose for which she had requested her company. She then related what had happened between her and the King, and also his indiscretion with Adelaide.

During her narrative, the Dowager sat perfectly still; she listened with the gravest attention, and only now and then by a slight inclination of her head, indicated that she was interested in the relation; and when the Queen concluded by asking her advice, she did not immediately reply, but paused for the space of

a minute or so, and appeared in profound cogitation, she then said,

“I regret that your Highness has summoned the Council on this domestic affair; for it is but an occurrence, such as falls out sometimes between the most loving man and wife. It is not mighty enough to claim the consideration of great men, and to draw the attention of the kingdom.”

“And am I then to submit,” said the Queen, eagerly, “to be thus exposed to such bickering in public, and such wrong in private?”

“Alas!” replied the old lady, with a sigh, “I fear it must be so. Such are the evil consequences that have arisen from that ungracious familiarity which has broken down all the ancient fences of propriety. It would have made the hair lift the helmets from the heads of our ancestors, had they but thought it possible that the King and Queen would break into anger in public.”

Notwithstanding the personal feeling which Mary had in this subject, she could scarcely refrain from smiling at the awfulness with which

the venerable Countess seemed to regard the decay of manners. She, however, replied with becoming seriousness,

“What has happened cannot be helped. It is to provide for the future that I entreat the advice of your wisdom and experience.”

“Your Highness, in applying to me, consults, I fear, a shallow oracle, all I can say is that the matter of happiness between kings and queens is of the same substance as between the clown and his dame. A decent ceremony is necessary to both, though light thinkers may not discern its uses at the scanty hearth of the cottar.”

The Queen perceived that the prejudices of the Dowager, ascribed a greater degree of familiarity to the customs of her Court than was really the case; and in consequence entered more minutely into her domestic circumstances than would otherwise have been necessary. To the recital the same grave and motionless attention was paid as when she described the unhappy jar that had obliged her to forego the excursion to Linlithgow.

“Please your Highness,” said the Dowager,



“by what you have been telling me, I hope there will be no offence in saying, that your Court needs the presence of elderly and discreet ladies. It is natural to your Highness’s time of life, that you should take to young attendants and gay dispositions, but there should be a compensating solidity of character to keep down the natural buoyancy of such companionship.”

Mary hastily interrupted her, and inquired if she would reside with her.

“Your wish,” replied the Dowager, “would be a command, but old age is stronger than the power of potentates; and I am lame and infirm.” She then resumed the thread of her remarks, and said, “moreover, though there are many wise and grave men among the ministers of your Highness, pillars of the realm, and worthy of trust and worship, yet none of them are without fault. My son, and I am not without the partiality of a mother, needs to be watched. He means well, and is ambitious of renown among great names, he is, however, not only emulous of high deeds, but too fond of having

his own way of doing them, and by this a second growth of craftiness has overspread his natural character. He was a tree of true oak, but an ivy has spread upon him, and I fear, caused detriment and damage to his nature and character. However, your Highness, I can but counsel you not to place all your business in the hands of men; the wisest of them have but coarse thoughts of feminine dependency, and a Queen has as much need of counsellors of her own sex, as the warrior in the field of soldierly companions. There is the Lady of Argyle, a pattern to all, and of a sufficient juvenility to be a social companion. I would counsel your Majesty to take her into your household, and have less to do with male wisdom than with female prudence, when any difference may, by ill chance, happen between you and the King again."

While they were thus discoursing, notice was brought in that Rizzio and some two or three of the council had arrived.

CHAPTER XXII.

“ My son ! of those old narrow ordinances,
Let us not hold too lightly.”

SCHILLER.

By this time the Queen regretted that she had been so hasty in calling her Counsellors to Dalmahoy. She had been prompted to this step by the resentment of the moment, being resolved under its influence, to separate herself from Darnley.

The illusions of passion, under which she had made him her consort, were dissipated. Whatever had been her regard for him she was awakened to the truth, that his for her was but of a slender kind. His vanity had been pleased with her early open preference; the perseverance with which she cherished her attachment, against the remonstrances of her friends, was also calculated to seduce him into a belief, that his power over her was not to be easily

shaken; and under this impression he came to Dalmahoy with Morton and Ruthven, persuaded that a reconciliation would soon be established.

In the course, however, of the ride from Edinburgh, although the distance was but a few miles, he was so wrought upon by their representations, that instead of being disposed, on his arrival, to meet her Majesty in a conciliatory spirit, as he was at their outset inclined, he felt as if concession were due to himself.

They had convinced him, in the pursuit of their own ambitious designs, that he could never be more than a cipher in the Government, unless he received the crown matrimonial; that is, such an acknowledgement of his royalty as would give him full marital right to exercise all the powers and prerogatives with which the Queen herself was invested. Accordingly, it came to pass, as soon as the Council formally assembled, that, instead of waiting to know for what business the Queen desired their advice, the Lord Ruthven proposed, as the subject of their deliberation, that the King, in addition to his nomi-

nal royalty, should be recommended to the Queen for the matrimonial-crown. Rizzio, who was officially present, perceived from the manner in which the business was brought forward, that it was the result of a predetermined plan, and well aware that the Queen was neither prepared for such a proposition, nor disposed to surrender so much of her power, set himself against the suggestion.

“The Council,” said he, “has been summoned in haste by her Majesty, doubtless for some special purpose, and no business can be originated until she has been pleased to declare the matter in which she requires advice.”

This check enraged Ruthven, notwithstanding its reasonableness; and in consequence he remarked, with a degree of heat which the occasion ought not to have inspired, that the Privy Council of Scotland were not to be taught their duty by a foreign upstart.

The Earl of Morton, as well as others, saw the unprovoked rudeness of this speech, and desirous that no more at that time should go forth to the world than what was already inevitable, observed,

“It’s a’ right what he says, we should receive her Majesty’s command before we proceed to other business. So first and foremost, Dauvit, gang ye ben to her Majesty, and beg her orders anent the matter we are to determine.”

Rizzio obeyed the directions with reluctance, and communicated what had taken place, and requested to be honoured with her Majesty’s commands to the Council.

Mary was never at a loss when any question arose which touched herself, her honour, or her dignity, and, to the astonishment of Rizzio, she said,

“Go and say that I would know from them in what manner the regal dignity can be maintained! and you will relate the particulars of what has taken place this morning.”

Rizzio, who was really uninformed on the subject, reminded her Majesty of that fact, and then mentioned the suggestion for giving the King the Crown-matrimonial which Ruthven had intimated his intention to propose.

At any other crisis the Queen would have heard this without emotion, for Darnley him-

self had often in private urged her to confer that dignity ; but having discerned his weakness, and being afraid of his violence, she had always evaded the request : her reply was emphatic.

“Hitherto,” said she in a resolute tone, “I have refused it out of motives of public polity ; truly he has earned the honour, by his conduct to me this morning ! No, he shall never have the matrimonial-crown of Scotland. It can only be conferred with the consent of the States of the realm, and he knows how well he has earned their approbation. I say no more, you will break up the Council on the best pretext you may, for I have been somewhat rash and heady, and it is time to arrest the hazard of further disorder.”

Rizzio returned to the Council, and informed them, that it would be expedient to postpone the consideration of the business on which the Queen desired their advice until after her return to Edinburgh, especially as some of them were disposed to press upon her the propriety of granting the matrimonial-crown to her consort.

Both Ruthven and Darnley started from their

seats, and demanded to know by whom she had been informed of any such intention.

“By me,” replied Rizzio proudly, and with stern resolution. “I have been sworn to serve her faithfully, and could I do so, and withhold from her knowledge what has been so openly proposed here.”

Some of the Counsellors thought that in this proceeding Rizzio acted bravely, and applauded him accordingly; but Ruthven and Morton’s party were disconcerted. They saw in it but a new instance of what they deemed his audacious presumption, and unbounded power, and an altercation arose among them, which was only ended by Maitland of Lethington, the Chancellor, dissolving the meeting.

As far as related to the Council itself the resolution was judicious, but the whole proceeding could produce no other effect than dissonance and discord among the members. The immediate result was a division of them into two parties, the King and the Queen’s. The Earl of Morton was the most intractable of the King’s friends, indeed of the whole party; and

his voice was heard the loudest in the deliberation, in so much that it was supposed among the household that an actual quarrel had taken place. His mother the Countess, who well knew his impassioned obstinacy, on being informed of their violence, placed herself in the way to intercept him before he could present himself to the Queen; and it thus happened, when he came out from the chamber, in which the Council was held, that she met him as he descended to the hall, and taking him aside, said,

“Consider what you are about. We are in the midst of embers and combustibles; neither can be stirred without danger; look you to the risk of angry deliberations; fear the guilt that may come of rash counsels, and think none of the advantage which troubles in the kingdom may bring to yourself. My son, I fear your honour is in danger, and that a fire may be kindled from this morning’s collision that will not be soon quenched.”

CHAPTER XXIII.

“ There is a busy motion in the heaven ;
 The wind doth chase the flag upon the tower ;
 Fast sweep the clouds, the sickle of the moon,
 Struggling, darts snatches of uncertain light.”

THE DEATH OF WALLENSTEIN.

THE anger of the Queen having subsided, and the judicious advice of the Countess of Morton taking effect before the Council broke up, she requested the King to remain with her at Dalmahoy, and suggested, that in the morning, notwithstanding the dispersion of the party, they should resume their journey to Linlithgow.

Soothed by this proposal, coming immediately from herself, Darnley had been too much disturbed by what had taken place, and the consequences which threatened to arise from it, not to accede. His mind being thus relieved of anxiety, and somewhat gladdened by the recon-

ciliation, he appeared that evening to greater advantage than usual. He even treated Rizzio with affability, and every thing wore an auspicious aspect, and was consolatory to Mary.

Of all the party no one was more content than the venerable Dowager; for the Queen was so delighted with the beauty of method, and the calm of regularity, which so eminently predominated in her household, that she was eloquent in her commendation of the usages of the better times, while she encouraged the old lady to expatiate on the virtue of decorum, and the efficacy to domestic happiness of a well-regulated formality.

The Earl, her son, who at all points might justly be said to have been the reverse of his mother, assumed, during supper, a degree of restraint at variance with his habits, in deference to her peculiar veneration for etiquettes; and thus, though his broad and free humour was in some degree wanting, a more temperate cheerfulness adequately supplied the deficiency. The Lord Ruthven, who also remained, did likewise some violence to his austere nature; he ab-

stained from controversy, to which he was constitutionally inclined, and seemed to differ less in opinion from those around him than on ordinary occasions. Moreover, he spoke seldomer than common, and thus his harsh, hollow, and creaking voice, interfered but little with the general harmony which pervaded the company. Rizzio alone, of all who had the honour of sitting at the royal table, appeared thoughtful. He was observed to watch with a lurking eye the countenances of his adversaries; for as such, notwithstanding the plausibility of appearances, he could not but regard Darnley, Morton, and Ruthven. Once or twice he thought that he could perceive signs of a secret understanding exchanged among them, and, according to the maxim of his country, he suspected that the sudden civility with which he was then treated was the result of some injury intended, or already a-foot against him. Nor were they less vigilant in observing his altered demeanour; his thoughtfulness was regarded as morose; and recollecting in what manner they had treated him in the morning, they were conscious he could

entertain for them no very conciliatory disposition. However, the evening passed with that moderate mirth which is the happy result of voluntary restraint, and the desire to conceal it.

The Queen remained at table longer than her accustomed hour, amused and pleased with the extreme debonair attentions of her erect and punctilious hostess. Immediately on her retiring she was followed by Darnley; but Ruthven and Morton, with several of the other guests remained behind, and from the immediate change that took place in their behaviour towards Rizzio, he could no longer question the correctness of his suspicions. They did not, it is true, actually attempt to vex and mortify him by their taunts, as was too often the case, but they acted as if they shunned communion with him. This treatment, obvious to all present, Rizzio, with more than his usual self command, appeared as if he neither heeded nor felt, a species of retaliation which his enemies were sufficiently excited to resent, and Morton would have done so on the spot in sarcasm. The motive of Ruthven was deeper, and, as if suffering

from a sense of injury, he became gloomy, and scowled from under the caverns of his brows with the tiger eyes of couchant revenge.

When a decent interval had elapsed after the King and Queen had withdrawn, Rizzio also left the room, and being troubled in thought, and discomforted by the incidents of the evening, he went down into the court-yard of the castle.

The night was cold and wintry, and a thickness in the air hung round the lamps at the portal of the hall, as if there had been something furry in the darkness; yet it was not a dark night, for the moon was high, and though not generally visible, her disk was at times seen wading through the misty air, with scarcely power enough to throw shadows. The shaded side of the court, however, was sufficiently marked, and at times the pinnacles on the turrets, when the light brightened, assumed a mystical configuration, suggesting dim reminiscences of ghastly visitants from crypts and cloisters.

To Rizzio, who felt a weight upon his spirits, the scene was dreamy and apparitional. Beneath the battlements grotesque rones and water-

spouts, sculptured into fantastical figures and chimeras, stretched themselves forward like imps and incubii, such as are supposed to hover in the air around the spell-fenced circles of sorcery, when futurity is invoked and constrained to withdraw her curtain. He felt as if he were in the presence of some unknown danger; and yet there was no visible omen. Once or twice he thought some one called him by name, and a dread fell upon him, and a sound was in his ears such as fated men are sometimes said to hear when dangers are contriving against them.

After taking several turns in the court, giving way to these gloomy cogitations, he returned into the hall, where many of the servants were standing round the hearth, and requested one of them to conduct him to a bed-chamber. His request was immediately obeyed; one of the domestics lighted a taper, and walked before him from the hall along a narrow passage leading to the foot of a turret-staircase, near to which a low door opened into a small apartment, where the decrepit Elspeth was sitting. The crone was asleep, her head leaning on her bosom; but on being roused she started awake,

and began to chide for being disturbed: suddenly observing the Italian, she checked herself, and lighting a candle at the taper in the hand of the servant, she assumed almost the suavity of her mistress, and solicited Rizzio to come with her.

Notwithstanding her apparent great age and general deformity, she ascended the turret-stair with remarkable agility; for in truth she was much younger than she appeared, being one of those distorted and premature creatures whom the Scottish peasantry fearfully suspect of being substitutes for unchristened children, whom it is alleged the fairies steal from their mothers bosoms. Her natural temper was cross and querulous; but she had been so long under the discipline of her stately and ceremonious lady, that she affected to be gentle and obliging, and even in some degree did possess a smoothness of manner that was interesting and agreeable.

On reaching the landing-place, which opened into a long, spacious, dark gallery, she moved on before Rizzio, holding her light aloft, bowling in her gait like something mis-shapen and

unblest, until she conducted him into a gaunt and dismal chamber, and on seeing that the fire lighted in the grate had fallen low, she stirred it, and stooping down, still holding the light in her hand, began to blow the faded embers with her mouth.

Rizzio, who had, on entering the room, seated himself, looked at her in this occupation as a phenomenon that belonged not to the beings and business of the world; she seemed so strange, so hideous, dwarfish, and supernatural, especially when once or twice, while she was endeavouring to revive the fire, she happened to cast her eyes grimly and gathered upwards, and peered at him with a keen and witch-like inquisition. At last, she set down the light on the hearth, and raising herself upright, if it could be so called, which was only unclosing the hoop of her decrepitude, by lifting her head from her breast, she chattered her long yellow disranked teeth.

Rizzio, disturbed by her scrutiny, inquired what she saw about him to make her gaze so strangely.

“The when and the where are not yet named.

It may be soon, or it may be syne. But I see at thy back a demon thing, holding outspread a winding-sheet, spotted with many a blob of blood. No living eye may that demon see; but its fingers, that hold the sheet of fate, are fleshless and mouldy. Dost fear to die?"

Before Rizzio could inquire what her vision or her rhapsody portended, she snatched up her light, and rolled, as it were, out of the room, like an uneven and many-cornered mass, instinct with purpose and motion. He called on her to stop, and she glared back upon him, and replied, "When all is quiet;" leaving him in some degree doubtful if she intended to return.

CHAPTER XXIV.

“The King
Felt in his heart the phantom of the knife,
Long ere Ravallac armed himself therewith.”

SCHILLER.

WHEN Elspeth had retired, Rizzio for some time sat reflecting upon her singular, repulsive, and unearthly appearance, and above all on the wild manner in which she chattered her teeth, and uttered her bodement. The fire again fell low; but as there was peat on the hearth, he rebuilt it, and soon blew it again into flame.

The wisest men have sometimes a hankering to know their predestined fortunes; and a crisis at this epoch in the life and feelings of the Italian, made him anxious to unclasp the volume of destiny; and thus, although incredulous to the pretensions of Scottish seers and spaewives,

his spirit took a superstitious infection from the circumstances in which he was placed. Conscious that he was surrounded by perils, dread and apprehension became mingled with the curiosity which the dark prognostication of the crone awakened.

He sat by the fire, ruminating on the incidents of the day, and the adventures of his life. He recalled to mind, that all the turns of his fortune had been ever heralded to him by the introduction of some new character; and he wrought himself, in the eeriness of the time, into a persuasion that something in the appearance of these harbingers was always in unison with the event that succeeded. When the omen, the augury, or by what other name the precursor might be designated, was fair, beautiful, and cheering, the event which followed was always benign and encouraging, leading on to prosperity. But when the demons of fate kythed in forbidding forms, he was assured that the next turn in his destiny would be disastrous.

These reflections made him feel as if something dismal and dreadful would arise from his



rencounter with Elspeth ; not that he regarded her either as the cause or the agent of the coming calamity, but only as a sign, an eclipse, which perhaps itself produced nothing, though it was an index of fearful things working out their dire effects. As he sat contemplating the embers and the consuming fuel in the grate, he fancied that the changes in their form were also tokens and forerunners of destiny, each bearing the legend of some occult intelligence, and all fraught with warning and admonition.

While he was sitting in this joyless mood, hearing the noises within the castle gradually ebbing into silence, he heard the drawbridge pulled up for the night, and the portcullis lowered with a rough rude sound resembling in volume, but harsher in discord, abrupt thunder. He listened; and this dismal noise was followed by the resounding clang of the hall-doors, the driven bolts of which echoed through the interior of the castle with a sound, not so loud, indeed, but more solemn than ordnance. A profound stillness succeeded; no earthly sound was heard; the very watch-dog, which howled loud

and long when the portcullis was let down, was still; and yet sounds, both of power and of terror, were heard murmuring in every direction. The rising blasts at intervals shook the casements; the vānes and weathercocks on the pinnacles creaked in the wind, like the swinging of gibbeted bones; and a rattling was heard of chains—it might be from those of the draw-bridge; while ever and anon a heavy low foot-fall was heard in the neighbouring gallery. Still all noise within the castle seemed departing; and for some time a dead silence, as if it possessed palpable power, curdled his blood, with an influence colder, and as unseen and irresistible, as freezing. The flesh crawled on his bones, and he sat immovable in his faculties, irresolute in his will, and with a horror upon him more unutterable than that with which Herod felt the worms writhing from his universal body. Terror could go no further without the obliteration of reason; and in this paroxysm he heard a knocking at his chamber door: it was a soft, gentle, solicitous sound. He listened; an interval ensued; again the timid and fearful applica-

tion was repeated. He attempted to rise; but his shaking limbs refused to sustain him. He attempted to cry, "Come in!" but his voice only uttered a brutish and unintelligible gibber. It had, however, the effect intended. The door was opened by the person that claimed admittance, and Elspeth came forward with an obscurely-burning untrimmed iron lamp in one hand, and a huge rusty key in the other.

"I could not come to you earlier, and I was afraid to enter lest you had fallen asleep, and that I might disturb you, for it is my particular duty to lock the hall-door, and to bear the key to my lady. It is the custom and the order of the household, and when the key has been delivered, no footstep must be heard within the house until the seneschal has rung the morning bell."

"Sit down," said Rizzio, "I am glad you have come, and thrice glad that you have disturbed me; for though I was not asleep, I have had dreams. The night-mare has been upon me, as if the vapour of some spell of witchcraft,

or of necromancy, had infected my brain. Ave Maria, I am glad you have come."

"Bethink you well," said Elspeth, setting down the lamp on the table, and fixing the key in her girdle, "bethink you well what you would ask me before you do so, for I cannot but reply to you truly; I may not equivocate."

"Then," said Rizzio, "you are conscious of some communion with the intelligences of futurity?"

"I said not so," replied she, chattering her yellow teeth, and looking from under her shaggy beetle brows, with eyes that glimmered like red intense embers of fire; "but I have seen things pass by long before their temporal advent; and I have had fearful intimations."

"Then I beseech you," said Rizzio, "if there is aught of fate that you can discern impending over me, tell me what you see?"

Elspeth made no reply, but looked at him with a strange restlessness of eye, and once or twice she appeared to shudder, and to draw her hand over her face, - like one that is in doubt if the sight beheld be real.

“Ask me,” she then said, “no questions. Be it enough for you to know that the shaft is yet in the bow-string which is destined to drink your heart’s blood.”

“Nay,” said Rizzio, “do not fancy that I may be frightened with oracular sentences. I have long been prepared to endure a violent death—it has been foretold—I expect it—I await it; come when it may, I shall not be unprepared.”

“If you are so well warned,” replied Elspeth, “wherefore do you ask to know more?” and in saying these words, she uttered, with a shudder, a wild low strange sound, something between a shriek and a groan, and passed her hand rapidly over his breast, as if brushing away something that she saw there.

“What mean you?” exclaimed Rizzio.

“It was a hand with a dagger, and on the ring finger was a dark seal, a talisman or amulet.”

“Hah!” cried Rizzio, “Lord Ruthven wears a ring of that kind, a magical gem which one of his ancestors brought from the wars in

Palestine, a blood-stone, traced with the unhallowed signs of Arabian sorcery; and he is my enemy."

"Good night," said Elspeth, rising, "Good night. You have had the prediction before—this is the second warning—look well to the third!" At these words she lifted her lamp, and with a frightful utterance of something that was intended for commiseration, but which harrowed him like derision, she suddenly retired.

CHAPTER XXV.

“ For me, I stand alone
Here in the world ; nought know I of the feeling
That binds the husband to a wife and children ;
My name dies with me, my existence ends.”

THE PICCOLOMINI.

BEFORE the break of day, when the seneschal rung his morning bell, there was a stir in the castle ; the servants of their Majesties were all a-foot, and a noise of preparation murmured everywhere ; the grooms were busy with their horses, and the cooks were rousing their fires for a becoming and lordly breakfast. But though none of the royal train, either ladies or gentlemen, had peered from their chamber doors, the all-considerate lady of Dalmahoy, on hospitable cares intent, was whispering admonitions of order and quietude to her handmaids.

The morning opened with a beauty beyond the season, for the winter was still on the ground and in the air. The clouds of the preceding night had passed away, and the cheerful morning star rose, marshalling the sun like a herald of glad tidings. The wind was at rest, and the trees were encrusted with hoar frost; the birds were all mute, and only sounds of business, or toil, or duty, disturbed the stillness of the time. Rizzio was one of the earliest who left his chamber, and by his haggard appearance it was evident he had passed a sleepless night. He ordered his horses to be ready, that when the draw-bridge was let down he might proceed before the Court.

Perhaps he had never before that morning been so sensible of his friendless and forlorn condition. The reconciliation of the King and Queen, notwithstanding his persuasion that he had incurred the enmity of the latter, did not so much trouble him as might have been expected, for he was persuaded it could not last long. But it might, he thought, be sufficient to give his more consistent and steadier enemies

time and opportunity to work his overthrow. He counted one by one, in his recollection, all the great men of the State, to whom he had endeavoured to recommend himself by his talents, his knowledge, and an endeavour to evince his wish to serve them; but among them all he could not determine on one that he might call a friend; and, in consequence, he thought to himself that “surely indeed my destiny is about to be consummated, for it is impossible that I can have reached this barren extremity, this waste and heath of fortune, without speedily experiencing some great change. Behind me I behold only rivals, adversaries, and enemies, closing in from all sides; they are coming down upon me, and I stand upon the verge of a precipice;—escape is impossible! And wherefore is it that I am placed in such optionless jeopardy; if I have borne myself too proudly, what have I done that shall hereafter be imputed to me as a fault? what record of unworthiness will be found against me in the chronicles of Scotland, when time shall have quenched the personal enmities that burn against me? What can be said, but

that I was a favourite, and honoured with the Queen's confidence, when she herself had no other friend."

He was standing on the steps of the hall-door when these indignant thoughts were rising in his mind. It happened, that in the midst of his ruminations, the drawbridge was lowered for the day, and the portcullis hoisted; a number of peasants, who were waiting on the outside until the gates were free, came in, partly with little presents of kine to the old Countess, but chiefly to see their Majesties. Among them Rizzio observed a person muffled in his cloak, and his face partly concealed in a light scarf, which he wore round his throat on account of the rawness of the morning air. His appearance, which was portly, and not without dignity, particularly interested the Italian, and after two or three scrutinizing glances he discovered that the stranger was Auchenbrae. His character was not unknown to him, nor the degree of favour which he enjoyed with the King.

The conclusion which he drew from the appearance of Auchenbrae at that particular time,

ought to have given him satisfaction, had his mind run in its wonted channel; but the predictions, if such they might be called, of Elspeth, had caused it to flow into desultory trains of thought, which, without bearing on any specific object, were yet dark, troubled, and overcast. He felt and feared the presence or approach of some unknown peril: but independent of this superstitious dread, he had just reason to think that the appearance of Auchenbrae was no ordinary casualty; he, however, deemed it expedient not to recognise him, and yet he resolved to track him with vigilance, and in this cautious determination he was confirmed by observing that Auchenbrae, regardless of his birth and connexions, avoided the hall, but lingered about the court. He did not forget himself so far as to court any kind of companionship with the servants, but still he affected a sequestration from every body that could not be long practised without being observed.

In the course of a short time, one of the King's special servants came into the court, and upon being beckoned by Auchenbrae to

come towards him, a few words passed in a whisper between them. The servant then immediately returned into the interior of the Castle, and having been absent a short time, he came back as if he had been the bearer of a message; when he rejoined Auchenbrae, a short conversation took place between them, at the end of which they returned into the hall together. Rizzio involuntarily followed them, and observed that Auchenbrae was conducted up the great stairs, and to that part of the Castle where the King and Queen had passed the night. A short interval ensued, and Auchenbrae came down the stairs and went straight to the gate, crossed the drawbridge, and mounting his horse, which a mounted groom held by the bridle, rode quickly away.

The palfreys and horses of the ladies and courtiers who were to ride to Linlithgow were duly prepared; an ample repast, befitting the season and the hospitality of the lady of the house, was spread and partaken of, and in due season the Court, being on horseback, left Dalmahoy.

It was observed that the Queen was in blither

beauty than on the preceding day; but the King's immediate attendants expressed their disappointment at the apparent chagrin which clouded his countenance; and the one who had conducted Auchenbrae into his presence observed to his companions, that the discontent and alteration in his Majesty's appearance had been sudden, and caused by something which Auchenbrae had communicated.

The Court moved forward, and although it was discovered that the Queen perceived the sullenness of the King's humour, it was seen that she yet studiously avoided the hazard of noticing it. Thus, by a little address on her part, and the seconding which her endeavour to maintain the general gaiety received, the party reached Linlithgow Palace without any particular occurrence arising in the course of the journey to occasion observation. Rizzio, however, was startled, when, on alighting at the gate, he saw Auchenbrae there, no longer affecting concealment, but dressed in his gayest attire. It struck him, however, as something indicative of a preconcerted design, that the King, who also saw Auchen-

brae, and evidently recognized him, took no notice of his presence. The state of his mind and feelings led him to suspect that he was himself probably the object of their machination, and this idea put him on his guard. He saw, as it were, from that moment, with three eyes, and heard with three ears; while he endeavoured to preserve his serenity, by reasoning with himself that he must submit to fate, and that no resolution of his own could alter the tenor or complexion of his destiny.

CHAPTER XXVI.

“ It is to be a night of weight and crisis ;
And something great and of long expectation
Is to make its procession in the heavens.”

THE PICCOLOMINI.

IN the meantime Southennan, with Knockwhinnie, had conveyed Adelaide to Linlithgow, where her grandmother, the Lady Kilburnie, then resided. Their intention was to remain there, until the mother of Southennan could be brought from the West country to be present at the marriage, after which it was proposed, that the young couple should proceed to visit Southennan's maternal relations in England, and then pass over to Normandy, where they intended to take up their abode for sometime, not doubting that in the course of a few months, Darnley, whose light affections never rested long on one object, would soon forget his guilty attachment to the bride.

The arrival of the Court was an unforeseen event, and calculated to derange this plan; both Southennan and Knockwhinnie, nevertheless, resolved to adhere to their original intentions. They deemed it, however, expedient to avoid all intercource with the courtiers; but this was not practicable, for the in course of an hour it had been communicated to the Queen, that Adelaide was already in the town, and with the Lady Kilburnie, intelligence which tended materially to diminish the enjoyment which her Majesty had anticipated from the excursion. The King also, besides the information which he had received from Auchinbrae, was informed from some other quarter of the same circumstance.

Southennan, seeing that he had not secured his bride from insult by removing her from Edinburgh, justly thought, were he to remain with her so near the Court, some new molestation might arise from it, and that at all events, she could not avoid waiting on the Queen. His situation thus became more embarrassed even than it had been, and it required some decisive step to extricate him from the labyrinth

of difficulties in which he was involved. No sooner had he taken this view of the case, than he suggested to Adelaide that she should wait on the Queen, and, without reference to what the consequences might be, explain the unhappiness to which the persecution of Darnley exposed her. Accordingly it was agreed, that in the evening Adelaide, accompanied by the lady Kilburnie, should visit the Queen in private, and solicit Her Majesty's special protection.

But while it was arranged to counteract the profligate designs of Darnley, he and his coadjutors were not idle. The anxious vigilance with which Rizzio watched the proceedings of Auchenbrae enabled him to discover that some project was on foot, the execution of which was to take place that night. His apprehensions, as we have stated, induced him to conclude that the undertaking was directed against himself; but when he had ascertained that the preparations chiefly consisted of having horses in readiness for a journey, he concluded differently, especially when he heard that Adelaide was in the town.

It could hardly be said that Rizzio was at any

time actuated by disinterested motives; and on this occasion it was perhaps not uncharitable to suppose, that the humiliations to which he had been recently subjected, as much as friendship for Southennan or respect for Adelaide, influenced him to warn the former of his suspicion. Giving, however, a fair interpretation to his motives, and supposing something of commiseration, as well as resentment for the treatment he had personally suffered, really to have affected him, he took an opportunity early in the twilight of the evening to visit Southennan.

“I know not,” said he, “what to advise you to do; for you have to deal with intrepidity in Auchenbrae and with profligacy in the King; but one thing is very obvious; they calculate on carrying off the lady, and the only security against that violence is for her never to move abroad without adequate protection.”

While they were thus conversing, a message came from the Queen requesting the attendance of Adelaide. Southennan was surprised, and said to Rizzio,

“This is strange, for some time ago a ser-



vant of the Lady Kilburnie was sent to her Majesty to solicit an audience, and he brought back a reply fixing the hour about this time."

Rizzio, after reflecting for a moment, said,

"This is a stratagem. It is plainly intended to intercept the Lady Adelaide, and to convey her away. It must be met with ingenuity and craft on your part."

"How, or in what way?" exclaimed Southennan. In this crisis Hughoc came in considerably agitated to his master, and indicated a wish to speak with him alone.

"Say at once what you have to tell. It can be no secret here," said Southennan.

Hughoc then related that he had heard Auchenbrae had engaged a young woman to attend a lady who was to be that evening removed from the palace across the Queen's-ferry, and he mentioned also other circumstances, which left no doubt as to the lady whom they intended to carry off.

Rizzio during the recital appeared thoughtful, but once or twice he was observed to smile, and when Hughoc had ended he said to him,

“Are you willing to run some little risk to serve your master?”

“I would be an unco’ servant if I wouldna”, replied the lad.

“Then Southennan,” said the Italian, “we must get up a masque on this occasion. Your servant is not remarkably stout; let him be dressed as your bride, and send him with proper attendants to the Palace, in obedience to the message you have received. If it be, as we suspect, he can bear the result. If no guilt is intended, no harm can come to him.”

Hughoc was mightily pleased with this suggestion, and Southennan went immediately to stop Adelaide and the Lady Kilburnie from their visit, until the effect of this stratagem was ascertained.

As soon as the twilight had faded, the wind being bleak and strong, Hughoc, wrapped in a mantle and attended by Knockwhinnie, proceeded towards the Palace. As they passed behind the church towards the southern gate, one of the King’s servants came to Knockwhinnie, and began to ask him something like a

confidential question. Presently several others came up, and parted Knockwhinnie from his supposed daughter, whom another party surrounded, and much probably to their surprise, found the lady willing to go with them. In the course of a few minutes she was placed on horseback before Auchenbrae, who, with a considerable retinue, among whom the voice of Rough Tam was heard, set off at a brisk rate on the Queen's-ferry road. Knockwhinnie, to the surprise of those into whose hands he had fallen, evinced no agitation at the abduction; but instead of going forward into the Palace, quietly returned to the residence of the Lady Kilburnie, and related what had taken place.

The success of the stratagem, so far, amused Southennan as well as the ladies; but Rizzio, who was still with them, appeared affected with considerable alarm.

“ If,” said he, “ I be suspected of having had any hand in this adventure, I may count on the King's avenging it. It will be felt by him as an injury of the deepest kind, and the inevitable ridicule which will arise, when the

trick is discovered, will sting him into unappeasable revenge. I must therefore hasten to the Palace, and conceal as well as I can that I have been here with you."

Accordingly he hastily quitted them, for his apprehension was well founded; but Fortune was not at the time auspicious. On leaving the house he observed one of the King's confidential menials lingering in the street, as if watching the door, and he fell in with several others in his way to the Palace-gate, which left no doubt it would soon be reported to Darnley that he was with Southennan when the trick was played.

The Lady Kilburnie, who was shrewd, and, notwithstanding her age, spirited, suggested to Adelaide that they still ought to attend the audience they had solicited. Accordingly, at the time appointed, being dressed for the occasion, accompanied by Knockwhinnie and Southennan, they proceeded to the Palace. Southennan, however, went no farther than the gate, but lingered on the esplanade before it, and while

leisurely walking there, overheard expressions of wonder and surprise escape from among the servants who were lounging at the gate, at the sight of Adelaide passing into the court, the cause of which he was at no loss to understand.

CHAPTER XXVII.

“ What noise is this ? ”

ROMEO AND JULIET.

THE Queen listened to the complaint of Adelaide with more equanimity than might have been expected from the natural liveliness of her feelings and the violence of her conjugal attachment. Previous circumstances had indeed prepared her for the communication, and the caprice and obstinacy of Darnley's conduct for some time, and particularly during the journey, had done much to abate the fervour of her rash and imprudent passion. Still she felt the humiliation of scorned affection, and the thought of the public knowing that she was so slighted, after having conferred on him so many tokens of woman's love and regal generosity, sank with rankling anguish deeply in her bosom.

“ I will think, my sweet Adelaide,” said she, “ of what you have told, and I will take care that you shall be so openly fenced from further insult, that even in my profaned and unhappy house none shall dare to molest you. Alas ! it is the language of a lowly assurance to be able to say only so much. I can, however, foresee that the King will not long honour us with his company. He grudges too evidently the little civility which he condescends to bestow, that I expect it will soon be altogether withheld. I rejoice, however, at the stratagem which has been practised on Auchenbrae ; and I trust the discovery will be made so public as to cover all the guilty parties with inextinguishable ridicule.”

While her Majesty was thus speaking, Darnley, with the Earl of Morton, entered the room. Seeing Adelaide there, he stood petrified, as if in the presence of an apparition. The Earl, who was not in the secret of his plot with Auchenbrae, viewed him with amazement ; and the Queen, beholding how much he was disconcerted, though her whole spirit was inflamed with indignation, could not repress a disposition to indulge her satire and derision.

“Your Majesty,” said she, “looks as if you beheld a wraith; but I assure you this is the true Adelaide, wherever you may think there is another.”

Darnley perceived that the Queen was aware of Auchenbrae’s stratagem, but could not divine how it happened that Adelaide was there, after the assurance he had received of her having been carried off; and dreading the wit and sarcasms of the Queen, he abruptly retired. Her Majesty laughed at his confusion; but it was with a flushed and vivid expression of contempt that she inquired of the Earl of Morton if he had heard the news, meaning the plot, the particulars of which she sarcastically recapitulated.

“Na,” replied Morton: “this beats cock-fechting.”

The Lady Kilburnie, a jocose old dowager, very different indeed from the stately paragon his mother, the dame of Dalmahoy, replied,

“Well said, my Lord; it’s between a cock and a hen.”

The Earl perceived, that under the assumed

gaiety of the Queen, her heart was far from being quiet, and he repressed his inclination to jocularity, with more delicacy of sentiment than he was generally supposed to possess.

“I grieve,” said he, after a brief pause, “that your Majesty should be thus molested. Really, the King is overly headstrong, and needs a curb. Ye’ll hae to gie his snaffle a sharp tug; for it’s no decent that a married man should gie himsel’ up to sic gallanting.”

The Queen, who had a dread of the freedom with which the Earl allowed himself to talk on such subjects, endeavoured to check the vein into which he was falling, by observing,

“I think, my Lord, the present is an occasion in which your friendly remonstrances might serve his Majesty; for it is not only derogatory to all propriety, but so great a blemish to his own dignity, that it cannot be suffered to proceed further under the same roof with me. Here I have taken this young lady, my friend, under my protection, and if she is not safe with me, her enemies must retire to some other place.”

“Hey,” cried the Earl, “this is blowing the

trumpet of war. Na, na, your Majesty, ye'll hae to learn how to wink."

During this scene, the Queen was often violently agitated, and at this familiar expression she said, with great severity,

"My Lord, I request you will go to the King, inform him what I have said, and request his decision on the spot: he must either pledge his honour that Adelaide shall be no further molested, or find some other house for his residence than that where I reside. Stirling or Falkland are tenantless; but remote. Dunstaffnage is a fitter place for one who so little respects the common courtesies of civil life."

"Will your Majesty," said the Lady Kilburnie, "permit me to put in a word? I was more than thirty years a married wife, and I speak little ill of my dear deceased Lord Kilburnie, when I say he had a temper and ways of his own: I never, however, saw good come of excessive severity on my part. We have all a duty to perform to the world, as well as to please ourselves. Kings and Queens, please your Majesty, stand on high pedestals, and the infection

of example from them should be well considered in their actions."

Adelaide at this remark began to weep and deplore, with the accent of extreme grief, that she should have been the cause of such distress to her royal mistress.

"If it be your Majesty's will and pleasure," said Morton, gravely, "I will go to the King and deliver your message to the very syllable; but what's to come o't? Ye turn him out o' the door like an ill-doer, and for what? For this lassie. Now, as my Leddy Kilburnie weel kens, is there a discreet wife within the four corners o' Scotland that will no' say it was a hasty job? Maybe there might be found a way o' southering this rent between you and the King. Ye must do something to cook him a little better. Ye ken he has lang been greenin for the matrimonial crown: now, if your Majesty was to make that a condition for his good behaviour, it's wonderful how smoothly a' things might then go between you."

Mary regarded him with astonishment, and then said,

“No, I do not complain of his ungrateful return for what I have already bestowed; but he has taught me that it has been too much. Never, my Lord Morton, again make that proposition.”

Morton bowed with profound reverence and retired.

Scarcely had he quitted the room when a noise of riot and laughter, and the trampling of horses, was heard in the court below, intermingled with violent expressions of rage, while flashes of light from flambeaux and torches gleamed on the ceiling of the room.

The Queen hastily rose, and unbarred the casement of her window, to hear from what cause the tumult arose. It came from Auchenbrae's party, intermingled with a crowd of menials and domestics, who had followed them on through the gates. Above the general din the voice of Auchenbrae was heard; but it was suddenly interrupted; and the court being ordered by the constable of the palace to be cleared, quiet was restored. The Queen, however, did not close her casement, but stood

some time at the open window in silence. The Lady Kilburnie sympathized with her abstraction, and observing that she several times hastily wrung her hands, would have disturbed her rumination; but Adelaide, better acquainted with her Majesty's habits, tacitly interposed, and by a sign restrained her from interfering. After a short interval, the Queen herself closed the casement, and when she turned round to the light it appeared she had been weeping: she made, however, no remark on the occurrence which had disturbed their conversation, but, evidently struggling to subdue her emotion, led the conversation to topics of indifference and cheerfulness. Nature was, however, too highly excited to be controuled; for on the occasion of some light incidental observation, which the old Lady facetiously made to second the Queen's endeavour to be gay, her Majesty suddenly burst into tears, and falling on the shoulder of Adelaide wept bitterly.

Relieved by her tears, she became serene but thoughtful; and somewhat imputing blame to herself for yielding to such undignified

weakness, she requested Adelaide to remain with her for the night, and the Dowager retired into the anti-chamber, where Knockwhinnie was waiting to conduct her home.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

“ This may do something.”

OTHELLO.

WHILE Southennan was walking on the esplanade in front of the Palace, waiting the return of Knockwhinnie and the ladies, Johnnie Gaff, who was in attendance on his master, came to him and said,

“ Heard ye, Southennan, ever o’ such a ploy? Auchenbrae, wha aince ran awa frae me *nudy pactay*, has, wi’ other *fairy natyry*, carried aff out o’ the King’s yett a leddy o’ high degree, as some say; others that she’s but a spunkie, for aneath her gay mantle she had a man’s boots.”

This was no new intelligence; but Southennan affected to be more interested in it than he really felt, and expressed his surprise that such an outrage could be committed within the verge and purlieu of the royal residence.

“Deed,” replied Johnnie, “its a great *lacuna* in gude order; but it comes o’ the King’s flunkies being Englishers and other Pagans out o’ foreign parts.”

Just at this juncture of the conversation the clattering of hoofs in haste was heard coming towards them, and presently Hughoc made his appearance, and, recognising by the flambeaux at the gate his Master and Johnnie in conversation, he briskly alighted, bade Johnnie hold his horse, and untying his mantle flung it across the saddle. Almost in the same moment, before there was time for any one to make an observation, he whispered to his master to come away; and thus Johnnie was left with the smoking horse, before he had time to rally his thoughts at the incident. A louder and more tumultuous din was also presently heard, and Auchenbrae, with some of his men, came around Johnnie on the esplanade. Without speaking they seized him as the fugitive, and dragged him into the guard-house within the gate of the Palace. It was the noise and disturbance of this affair which drew the Queen and the ladies to the window.

“What has happened,” said Southennan to his lad, when they reached an obscure part of the esplanade; “how is it you have run away and come back here?”

“Deed, Sir!” replied Hughoc, “I had nae will in the matter. When I was laid across the horse before him, and they set aff at the gallop, I couldna bear the pommel o’ the saddle, but I tholed as lang as possible till the horse stumbled in ganging thro’ a burn, which made me in an agony cry out in my natural voice, ‘Lord’s curse!’ for I thought my inside was shaken out. Auchenbrae gied a louder shout than mine, and tried to throw me down; but I gripped him by the belt and jerkin, and at the same time catching hold o’ the bridle, hault him wi’ me to the ground. He was a thought stunned by the fall, and before he gathered his heels I was in the saddle and aff. No’ an inch o’ the road did I ken, even if it had been fair day light; sae I allowed the beast to take its ain way, admonishing him by heel and hand to the best o’ my ability. Od, its a clever brute, and brought me along like the deil in a whirlwind! I

heard a rising sough behind me, and tho' I had nae spurs, I trow there was nae want o' metal in my heels: sae I rode and they rode, and the houses and the hedges flew past like witches riding on besoms to Noraway. But Maister, I doubt somebody will hae a braw lawing to pay for this sport; for I heard Auchenbrae tell my new friend, Rough Tam, that to Tam's ain share the booty o' this night's raid wouldna be less than a hundred merks. Od, they will be a pair o' fule-looking men when they find the like o' Johnnie Gaff instead o' me. I wonder what the King will say when he sees such a kirk steeple o' upright deformity, instead of the leddy Adelaide. I'm sure I couldna keep frae laughing in his face, if I was to hae my head chappit aff for 't the next minute."

In the meantime the noise had brought to the windows in the court of the Palace all its inmates, with lights and flambeaux in their hands, and shouts of laughter began to rise at the remonstrances and expostulations of Johnnie Gaff, declaring his ignorance and innocency of the whole affair; while Auchenbrae, maddened by

the sneers and ridicule of the grooms and menials, could scarcely give utterance to his rage. The Earl of Morton was standing at the same window with the King, and perceiving something of the truth of the affair, could not restrain his jocularities on so rich an occasion; but Darnley was incapable of brooking anything like mirth at that moment. He saw that by the return of Auchenbrae the affair could not be withheld from the public, and he writhed with the dread of the ridiculous tale of such a figure as Johnnie Gaff having been substituted for his dalliance instead of Knockwhinnie's fair and gentle daughter. His mind in consequence was heated to the utmost, and his rage vented itself in involuntary monosyllables, as intense and implacable as the sparks which spring spontaneously from the red and glowing iron, scintillating from the forge.

In the midst of this burning and combustion of thought, he suddenly recollected what he had been told by the servant, who had seen Rizzio come from Southennan and Knockwhinnie at the time when the stratagem was carrying into

effect; and with one of those lucid conjectures which like glances of light afford an instantaneous vision of the truth, he ascribed the failure of the stratagem and its absurd result to some interposition of the Italian, and fiercely clenching his hands exclaimed,

“I will have bloody revenge for this. He shall die, had he fifty lives!”

Morton, startled and aghast at his demoniac violence, inquired in a subdued tone, and with a degree almost of diffidence, to whom he alluded. The altered voice and visage of the Earl had an immediate effect, and, with an effort to master his vehemence, Darnley replied,

“I mean that he deserves to die—the enemy of Scotland—the poison in my cup—the minion of the Queen. Hah! the favourite of my wife.”

This insinuation, which was too significantly given to be mistaken, produced a momentary consternation in Morton. It was a thought that had never before been suggested either by fancy or malevolence. He stepped with rapid stride close to Darnley, laid his hand firmly on his arm, and with a troubled look exclaimed,

“What would your Majesty? What cause hae ye ever had for that suspicion?”

“Have you not seen,” said Darnley in reply, “with what scorn she rejects the advice of every other. How she clings to him, as if he were her all in all.”

“Pardon me,” said Morton, unable to overcome his surprise, “without some evidence it’s a thought which shouldna be uttered.”

“I want,” replied the King, “no other evidence than the experience I have had of her alienated affections. She contemns me; she treats me with less consideration than a menial.”

Weak, rash, and vindictive as Morton well knew Darnley to be, there was something so monstrous in this perversion of fact, and while the Palace was ringing with the outrage which his licentiousness had instigated, that even his own lax principles revolted at the insinuation, and made him grave and solemn far beyond the habitude of his character.

He perceived that the King’s jealousy, if so random an accusation could be regarded as any proof of the existence in him of that miser-

able passion, placed him entirely in his power ; and he saw also an opening for the gratification of the hatred with which the haughty and aspiring Italian had so long exasperated him. But at that time he deemed it prudent only to entreat the King to proceed with vigilance and caution, warning him that the dishonour of the Queen could not be breathed to the kingdom without exciting the most dreadful consequences. All this seriousness was, however, dictated by craft, and the admonitions were given to excite the germ of that jealousy from which, feignedly or felt, the King appeared to suffer.

CHAPTER XXIX.

“ Meagre were his looks,—
 Green earthen pots, bladders, and musty seeds,
 And old cakes of roses.”

SHAKSPEARE.

ON leaving the King, the Earl of Morton went to the lodgings of the Lord Ruthven, an ancient, dark-turretted mansion near to St. Michael's Fountain. The lower part of the house was without windows towards the street, and those of the first floor were small square port-hole looking apertures. The entrance was by a vaulted gateway, which was shut for the night, but the Earl having knocked and made himself known, was admitted and conducted up stairs.

He found Lord Ruthven reclining sick on a couch; he had for some time enjoyed but indifferent health, and was that evening more severely attacked. On a table at his shoulder

lay several papers of apothecaries' stuffs and other Esculapian pageantry. His temples were bound with a cloth, and being naturally meagre and sallow, his appearance indicated the presence of greater disease than he was actually suffering.

"What's the matter, Ruthven?" said Morton, on seeing him in this condition, "that ye're looking sae malegrugrous."

"Not much," was the reply; "but I have felt a little worse to night, otherwise I should have been with you. Pray tell me, what has all this tumult at the Palace been about?"

"Its a ravelled hesp," replied the Earl, "and will take patience and perseverance to wind a clue out o't. I ken few o' the particulars, but I guess its some pandering for the King, and that he has been disappointed. But, Ruthven, I hae something o' mair importance to say. Hae ye e'er observed the Queen casting a sheep's-e'e at that pawkie deevil Dauvit?"

"How! never. When has this come up?"

"I'm glad to hear you say sae," replied Morton, "and I beg you will no appear to hae

heard anything about it, especially frae me, if the King should speak to you anent it."

"You surprise me," rejoined Ruthven; "that cursed Italian has been a serpent sent amongst us; I wish we were well rid of him."

"It'll no be long, I trow, for the King has sworn to be his death."

"And more than the King," replied Ruthven, grimly, "I'm not to be insulted with impunity."

"Whisht, whisht! dinna exert yoursel'. It's no' a task for a private hand, nor can it weel be done in course o' law, seeing that, although his pride is no langer to be endured, he hasna just been guilty enough to be cast in a trial. But if he maun be put out of the way, and I dinna see how it can be avoided, it should be done wi' becoming solemnity. For my part I hae tholed at his hands such insolence, as would hae been enough in better times, to hae made the banes o' our auld Scottish barons rattle wi' rage in their coffins."

"But if it be, Morton, as you say, that the Queen has an unlawful partiality for him; its

an undertaking of more peril that we are thinking."

"That's no' to be doubted, if we fail: but the Queen isna without a modicum o' sagacity; and if we take right care to fasten a judicious suspicion upon her, she'll keep a calm sough."

"Do you think it possible that the King would join us?"

"He'll promise, and if we keep at him, I doubtna he'll do his part: but he's such a weathercock, that naebody can count upon his executing any purpose."

"Still," said Ruthven, "he must be one of us. If we cannot be sure of his hand at the dagger, we must have it at the pen before embarking in the business, which I look upon to be a vindication of private wrong, and a removal of a great public grievance: there must be a compact; and we shall not be safe unless we have the King's name to the paction. But if there be no well-founded cause to suspect the Queen's conduct, it cannot stand consistent with honour that we should invent any story to the prejudice of her fame as a lady."

“ I ’m sure,” replied Morton, “ the thought o’t never entered my head.”

“ And,” said Ruthven, “ I never heard of it before. Who told you ? for on that tale must hinge our proceedings.”

Morton evaded the question by saying, “ Let us end the matter for the present, and in the morning, when we see the King, we shall learn more o’ the rights o’ Dauvit’s gallanting.”

Ruthven being a good deal exhausted, Morton bade him good night, satisfied that he had so well ascertained his willingness to join in what he believed to be a meritorious enterprise; he then returned to the Palace, where he was lodged, and in passing to his chamber met Rizzio going with a light in his hand, also to his.

“ Weel, Dauvit,” said the Earl, “ I ’m blithe to see thee; and if thou canst spare half-an-hour frae thy bed, I would fain waste it in a crack.”

Rizzio had from his last interview with Morton and Ruthven resolved to alter his behaviour

towards them, and to put on a demeanour of greater ceremony; instead, therefore, of answering the Earl with his wonted familiarity, he simply bowed in acquiescence to the proposal, and walked back to the chamber which was appropriated to his official duties: on entering it he placed a chair for the Earl, without taking another for himself.

“Hey dey!” cried Morton; “the post may get a hag for this. What’s come o’er thee the night? I hope that this new parade, Dauvit, doesna’ come o’ any malice that thou has been clecking against me. Gude save ’s! is’t a fœdum afore death?”

“My Lord is pleased to be facetious,” said Rizzio drily, without making any other remark.

“Sit ye down, Dauvit, there can be nae friendship where there is such an overplus o’ ceremony.”

“Friendship!” exclaimed the Italian, with a slight sarcastic inflexion of his voice: adding, “I rejoice in all the friendship with which my Lord is pleased to honour me.”

“Come, come, Dauvit; nane o’ thae tan-

trums: thou knowst that my bark is waur than my bite; and I would fain hope that it'll no' be lang till there's a better understanding between us. Howsever, Dauvit, what I wanted wi' you was to inquire about this exploit o' that vagabond Auchenbrae. It's no' in the course o' nature that the Queen can see and hear o' such clandestine immorality going on, as it were, in her very dish, and no feel the exasperation o' a woman and a wife, to say naething o' a Queen. Nae gude, Dauvit, can come o't."

Rizzio, resting his hand on the back of the chair near to which he was standing, replied, seriously,

"It is much to be regretted that the King should be so little circumspect in his amours."

"Gude sake, Dauvit! is he that way given?" cried Morton, with a look of such well-affected droll dubiety, that Rizzio was taken off his guard, and sat down in the chair. "The scoundrel," continued Morton, "ought to get his droddum dressed. If he gang on at that rate he'll break the Queen's heart, or make her take revenge. But I hope, Dauvit, to speak wi' so-

briety, that her Majesty doesna' take his bull-wavering overly to heart; because, if she does, it will be necessary for her Council to interfere, and gie the young man an admonition."

Rizzio was too well acquainted with the depth and cunning of the facetious statesman not to discern that there was some intent at the bottom of his apparent confidential freedom, and accordingly he replied guardedly :

" Whatever distress the loose conduct of the King may occasion, I am sure her Majesty will suffer much before she complains; nor is it likely that she would ever condescend to do so to me."

" Now, Dauvit, that's what I would, if ye would let me, call a whid; for if a' tales be true, there's no ane, in the Court or out the Court, that she mair respects, and I'm sure ye weel deserve it; for having neither kith nor kin in the country, ye can afford to do justice among a' parties, and stick closer by her than if ye were ane o' her natural horn lieges."

" Her situation is one of great difficulty, and she has not such friends about her as her un-

happy circumstances require," replied Rizzio; and fixing his eye steadily on the Earl, added, "We have all cause to repent of the part we took in consenting so easily to this unfortunate match."

"We!" echoed Morton, as if to repel the equality it implied. But he had a purpose to accomplish, and mastered the momentary resentment, saying, "I wash my hands o' the business; for weel may you recollect that I continued in my obstinacy, as it was called, till the very last. But what I wanted to say, Dauvit, was this: it has been told me that the Queen has manifested a great decay o' affection towards the King. Now, after the vehement love that she had for him, this canna' come without cause; and my experience in the nature o' womankind assures me that it's no' altogether owing to the neglect she suffers. Think ye, Dauvit, that there is any fallow about the Court that has cast the glammour o'er her."

"My Lord is plain in speech," replied Rizzio. But if I had observed, or fancied such a thing, could I say so without better proof than my own thoughts."

“ Weel,” replied the Earl, a little baffled by the wariness of this answer, “ thou’s an auld farrant chappie, and would make a jealous man think, considering thy craftiness, that thou had’st maybe a finger in the pie thyself.”

The Italian, who had during the whole of this conversation perceived that the Earl was pursuing some object, was struck with this remark; it apprised him of more than he had either apprehended or dreamt of; and to make his answer the more emphatic, he rose and walked once across the room, and then returning to his former place behind the chair on which he had been sitting, said, fervently,

“ My Lord has more than once before treated me as if I were insensible to honour. Out of deference to his rank and consideration in the state, I have stifled my feelings; but in this instance he has exceeded all allowable license.”

Morton made no answer, but starting from his seat left the room, making the floor shake with his tread.

CHAPTER XXX.

“ When I consider life, ’tis all a cheat,
 Yet, fooled by hope, men favour the deceit.”

DRYDEN.

Most men, even the least observant, meet with eddies in the current of life, and when perplexed in them, find themselves under the influence of a control which they cannot resist. Every thing then seems in such conjunctures to be turned awry, and under the fallacious conception that Fate may be overcome, they struggle to extricate themselves; but the more they do so they become, like a bird in the fowler’s net, more and more entangled. There can indeed be no greater error in the practice of life, than that of supposing a man may, of his own effort, change the course of his fortunes; while there is no truth more certain than that the stream keeps

on in its destined channel, despite of all the individual attempts to mar it. It was by observing this fact that Lord Bacon ascertained the truth of his great moral dogma, viz. that if a man can afford to wait he will be seldom disappointed, and that what we call disappointments are but the abortions of endeavours to attain our ends without adequate means and preparations.

The events of the important night which Mary and Darnley passed at Linlithgow brought on one of those combinations of circumstances in which human wisdom is of least avail. Instead of waiting to see what would have been the result in the morning of Auchenbrae's frustration, almost every one of the party interested adopted an independant course, and the consequence was collision in the effects of their resolutions.

Darnley, ashamed and mortified at the result of his stratagem, determined to avoid the ridicule to which he was conscious of being exposed, by returning early in the morning to Edinburgh, where he directed the Earl of Morton to

join him in the evening. The Queen, somewhat indisposed, agreed to remain at Linlithgow. Knockwhinnie deemed it expedient that his daughter should be altogether removed from the hazards of the court; but to this Southennan was opposed, for, whether judiciously or not, he regarded the King's power as less in the vicinity of her Majesty than at a distance, where his name was more revered.

But of all those who were thus embarrassed and in conflict, Rizzio felt himself the most so. He could no longer disguise his true situation from himself, if for a long time he had done so. His conversation with Morton during the preceding night had roused his fears to an apprehension of a wider and wilder danger than he had ever previously contemplated.

He had long seen that the lines of his life scarcely left him an option. If he remained in the Queen's service, many signs and symptoms taught him that his doom would soon be consummated. If he left it, as he often meditated, an inglorious and humble lot would circumscribe the sphere of his talents, and he imagined

himself, by the sense he was daily experiencing of his comparative superiority, destined for higher action than the little offices of an Italian syndic, the utmost he could hope for in his own country. Thus, balancing in his mind whether to pursue the splendid career in which, hitherto, he had been so successful, and comparing its cares and troubles with the quietude of the humbler walk which he believed he might yet choose, he went in the morning to report the business of the day in his accustomed manner to the Queen.

He had passed a restless night; his dark complexion had something of the faded hue of lassitude, and his eyes were heavy, and moved languidly, as if he at the moment were suffering from some corporeal malady. His whole appearance bore the impress of depression so visibly, that when he appeared in the Queen's presence, her Majesty was moved by the common feelings of humanity, to inquire what had befallen him that he appeared so exceedingly unwell.

"My disease, madam, is a common one," said he, "to those who are without friends.

Your Majesty's gracious favour has shone upon me, not unenvied, and I fear will not much longer be permitted. I perceive, madam, that I have failed to attract any friendship among those with whom my office requires me to act. I stand in their way; and while that is the case, I can only perform a small part of my duty to your Majesty."

"To what, Rizzio, does this prelude tend?" enquired the Queen, with a soft and saddened voice, for she anticipated that he was about to offer his resignation; and from the departure of Count Dufroy, she had no other whom she accounted her confidential adviser, especially in that correspondence with the Catholic powers and the Pope, which faith and predilection made her esteem as amongst the greatest of her regal duties.

The Italian, who notwithstanding his numerous faults and defects, and especially his boundless arrogance, was deeply susceptible of kindness, and felt the sympathy which the Queen more by her manner than her language expressed, replied,

“ Whatever is your Majesty’s pleasure, I am ever ready to obey, but if my humble services could be performed without the necessity of intruding so much upon your private time, it might have the happy effect of mitigating that envy, of whose malice I have had some taste since the Count Dufroy returned to France.”

The Queen, with a still gentler tone, said, “ I will not disguise, Rizzio, that I have myself seen symptoms of that envy, and that the King grudges the confidence I place in you respecting my correspondence with the Duke of Alva and his Holiness, thinking, that in that negociation he should have been a chief adviser. Verily he ought to have been so, but he too early—” Her voice faltered, and a tear filled her eye, but not to overflowing. In a moment however, recovering, she added, “ The trust I have placed in you assures you of my protection, which no one will dare to violate. While you remain with me there is no adversary whom you may fear. I am a timid woman, but all my ancestors have boasted courageous blood, and I am not unmindful of the dignity

which, by the grace of God, I have inherited from so many kings."

Rizzio was affected to sadness by this gracious condescension; and kneeling, bent over her extended hand with profound emotion. At that moment the page in the antichamber announced the Earl of Morton; who coming abruptly forward, with his characteristic irreverence, saw part of this scene, and either feigned or was struck with great surprise. The Queen herself was not otherwise moved than to observe to him,

"I am grieved to find Rizzio unhappy in his condition. I pray you, Morton, if by accident or by prejudice you have been accessory to his discomfort, that you will remember I have said there is not, I believe, in my service, one more trustworthy, nor has Scotland a more faithful friend."

"Your Majesty," said the Earl, coolly, "has great confidence in Dauvit, and what's for your contentation must be a pleasure to a' your lieges;" and he held out his hand, in token of reconciliation, to Rizzio.

"No, my Lord," said the Italian proudly,

“ the friendship of my Lord must hereafter be estimated by actions ; professions may be wisely dispensed with in our reciprocities.”

“ Dauvit,” replied the Earl, with a look that divulged how little of peace or amity was in his bosom, “ It’ll no be lang till ye hae lasting proof o’ my friendship and the sincerity o’ my regard.”

This, nor the look with which it was accompanied, was intended to be understood by the Queen. But that quick-sightedness for which she was so celebrated, had apprized her, from the moment Morton entered, that some recent dissension had arisen between them, and she beheld, with a degree of dread, the lowering and malignant look with which his equivocal expressions of regard were uttered.

“ I will not, Morton,” said she, “ allow this to go further. Go with Rizzio, and quietly discuss your difference, and come back together when you are reconciled.”

The firmness with which this was expressed, forbade reply ; and the Earl and Rizzio retired, with no disposition, however, on either side, to comply with her wishes.

CHAPTER XXXI.

“The hour of retribution must be nigh.”

CAUNTER.

MORTON returned in the morning to Edinburgh, and was followed in the course of the afternoon by Darnley and Ruthven. Whether this was the result of arrangement, or one of those fortuitous combinations of circumstances by which the current of events is helped forward, it would serve but little purpose could we positively explain. It happened, however, that the same evening the King had a party at supper; and it was remarked by the menials of the Palace that his guests consisted exclusively of persons who, save on state occasions, were rarely seen in his Majesty's company. Besides the Earl of Morton, the Lords Ruthven and Lindsay, together with Maitland of Lethington, were seve-

ral others of less degree; all men of stout hearts and ready swords, ever alike, willing and prepared for bold enterprises.

While they were at table and the servants in the room, the Earl of Morton was more than usually facetious. He told his queerest stories, and laughed louder at them than his auditors: but it was thought his laugh was in some degree constrained; that it lacked the gaiety of light-heartedness, and had more of the sound of a rattle than the cheerfulness of a joyous spirit. Ruthven sat solemn, erect, and rueful; no symptom of inward satisfaction mantled on his meagre and colourless visage. At times his eyelids fell, and he appeared wrapt in cogitation. Maitland was seemingly more at ease. He was possessed of a keen searching spirit; he cut open with the glance of his eye, as it was said, the bosoms of men, and read their naked hearts: but although he was undoubtedly a man of marvellous discernment, he seemed on this occasion to fail in his habitual firmness. The jocularities of Morton produced no other effect upon him than a kind of grave sullenness, which rejected the mirth as ill-timed.

There was also present George Douglas, a youth, half-brother to the Earl of Murray, the same who was afterwards celebrated for assisting the Queen in her escape from Loch Leven Castle, a brave and steady youth. The stern blood of the dark Douglasses circulated fiercely in his veins, and he was not only audacious for his years, but possessed that saturnine prudence for which his ancestors were so renowned. How he came to be among the royal guests assembled on this occasion history has failed to record; but it is probable he was one of the King's particular friends. It were, however, to do him wrong to regard him as belonging to that licentious association in which Darnley too much delighted. With them was also present Andrew Car, of Fawdenside, a rude, obstreperous, coarse mannerless fellow, who recommended himself to the King by his fearless spirit and indiscriminative boldness. Several other persons, more distinguished for birth, bravery and adventure, than for those qualities which do most honour to men of rank and influence, were also present.

During the time of supper, Darnley, who was

never distinguished for convivial accomplishments, appeared thoughtful, almost dejected; and in one of these fits of disregard of the comfort of others into which he too often allowed himself to fall, he started from table and walked hurriedly into another apartment, and, returning as abruptly, resumed his seat without explanation, greatly to the amazement of his guests. At last, supper being finished and the servants retired, Morton, who led on the occasion, circulated the flaggons of sack and hippocras, and seemed anxious to exalt the hilarity of the company; but still there was something of an ungracious method in all that took place. It plainly related to an undivulged business, and twice or thrice there was a pause in the mirth, and the guests looked at one another as if expecting some proposition to be offered to their consideration; but as often as this happened, after a short pause Morton revived the conversation, and led it on to new topics, in which, though he had no participators, all appeared to be seriously listening; but it was with absent minds and unhearing ears.

The wine, however, was gradually in the meanwhile acquiring its wonted predominance. The guests generally spoke more freely, and those who were the more intimate friends of Darnley, treated him with less and less ceremony. But still something in the manners of all indicated expectation, and this was particularly the case when Morton, seeing the candles burning dim and the flaggons ebbing, ordered a new supply both of light and wine.

“Let us hae,” said he, “a new supply o’ the wine to wet our whistles, for mine’s gized; and the light for our dark work.”

The visages of all present lowered at this irreverent speech, save only that of Ruthven, who maintained his grim equanimity undisturbed and unchanged throughout the evening.

The chamber in which they were seated at table was a large irregular apartment, hung with tapestry, which had been put up on the occasion of the royal nuptials, representing scenes of hunting and heroism. The ceiling was gorgeously carved and gilded, in massy circles, knobs, and compartments; it was truly regally rich and

grand; but a spirit was in its aspect which moved the minds of all present to gloomy reminiscences, and obscure apprehensions of dangers that had no body but in fears.

While the servants were renewing the tapers, and bringing in the replenished flaggons, the remarks of Morton were desultory, almost wild, and he seemed to speak as if he exercised no volition over his ideas. In this crisis Maitland could not refrain from inquiring, with an acute accent, what had come over him that he talked so without purpose.

“Bide a wee, Lethy,” replied the Earl; “I’ll let you ken by and by. It’s no for naething the gledd whistles.”

“Well, come out with it, Morton,” said the King, “or I shall go to bed;” and in saying these words he yawned with excessive lassitude as it seemed.

Morton, Ruthven, and Maitland exchanged serious looks at each other.

“I doubt,” said Morton, “that if your Majesty is to rule in Scotland as a King should, ye’ll hae to want many a night’s rest in camp

and council before ye get a' thing your ain way."

This admonition, although lightly, even merrily spoken, was accompanied with a look that roused Darnley from his apathy, and he replied,

"It will be a long time I suspect, Morton, before you see me ruling in Scotland as a King should. Her Majesty needs no help in her government. She hath herself great talents, sufficient for the royal dignity; and for council has she not one that is worth us all?"

"And wha's he?" cried Morton.

"Rizzio," exclaimed Darnley, striking the table with vehemence.

"Rizzio!" echoed Ruthven from the hollow caverns of his voice, and starting up and laying his hand on the hilt of his sword, he added in his deepest tones, "We have endured him too long!"

All the other guests re-echoed his words, and the King, drawing his sword, theirs in the same instant flashed from their scabbards, and a stern silence for some time prevailed.

CHAPTER XXXII.

“Man preys on man, and from the wings of Time
O’er the wide world flings mischief.”

CAUNTER.

WHEN the King’s guests had resumed their seats, the Earl of Morton then opened the business for which they had been assembled.

“Please your Majesty, and my Lords and gentlemen,” said he, “it’s a manifest thing that we are a’ tarred wi ae stick. It canna be doubted that the pawkie upsetting deevil, Dauvit Ritchie or Rizzio—it’s a name no musical in Scottish mouth—has been an agony to the best hearts o’ Scotland; and really it says but little for the auld Scottish valour, that we submit in sic a hen-hearted manner to his arrogance. Had sic a domineering Mischief been seen amang our ancestors, they would hae trod him

like a black clok aneath their iron heels; but this small symptom that we have just seen o' rekindling courage amang us is a cordial to my spirit. Words, however, are but wind, unless we follow them up wi' deeds. Now, as naething can be mair certain than, one and a', not only o' us here, but o' every man o' a right mind in the country, that the Italian interloper ought to be put out o' the way, I dinna think that we could do better, while here enjoying ourselves sae couthily in his Majesty's joyous presence, than to think o' some way o' seeing it weel done."

Ruthven replied, "I most heartily join with Morton in thinking we have borne quite enough from the pride and insolence of Rizzio. We have sullied our honour by our pusillanimity. I am ready with hand and sword when his Majesty is pleased to command my service in this necessary work."

Maitland of Lethington, with his usual plausibility here remarked, "I agree with my Lord Ruthven, that we have suffered to the extremity of patience; but until his Majesty sanction the

undertaking, it would be to make an enterprize of necessity look like a crime, were we privately, and of our own accord to proceed farther. What is your Majesty pleased to think of this proposal to put Rizzio to death."

"Is it so determined?" said Darnley, with a husky voice, and a colourless countenance.

"We have no option," resumed Maitland; "to seek his banishment would make the Queen the more obstinate in defending him. We beseech your Majesty deeply to consider whether it consisteth with honour and your high station, that he should dwell in such familiarity with her Majesty?"

"Ye speak words o' wisdom, Lethy," said Morton, "and if his Majesty were a simple man, and her Majesty a burgher's wife, we ken that though a sword werena in the house, that the tongs frae the chumley-lug would do as weel to vindicate his conjugal authority. 'Deed! your Majesty is driven up into a corner, and folk will say, if ye let Dauvit live and thrive, ye're both coronated and cornuted."

Darnley writhed at the ignominy of the sar-

- casm, and before he could demand more becoming language from Morton, Ruthven interposed and said,

“We are spending our just wrath in weak words. Does your Majesty sanction our proposed undertaking to rescue the Queen from her derogatory thralldom, and to revenge the wrongs we have suffered from his pampered insolence. Here are men around your Majesty, ready to execute the justice which Rizzio has so insolently merited.”

“In ae word, may it please your Majesty,” said Morton, “are ye content to breathe, to creep like a downcast thing in the terror o’ Dauvit’s e’e, or hae ye courage to act wi’ us, and to stand by us; for after what has passed this night, it’s no consistent with prudence to ourselves, to let this matter flutter in doubt. If your Majesty will be art and part in the business, we ’ll no be slack in the work, nor shall we afterwards be wanting to get you the crown matrimonial, if no’ something better. But supposing your Majesty should continue to float between wind and water, we must hae another

sort o' handling. In short, we would neither be honest men nor loyal subjects, if we didna warn your Majesty, that we're constrained, by stress o' circumstances, to be as plain as we're pleasant, and to let you know, that unless you sign this paper, ye may find frost in it. Lethy, read the paction to the King, and read it distinct; for ye hae at times a burr that whiles gies your words twa meanings."

Maitland took from his breast a parchment, which he read, and which was to the effect, that whereas divers persons named therein, had for the good of the realm and the honour of the Queen's Majesty, undertaken to slay and put out of the way David Rizzio, his Majesty not only approved of the same, but with free good will sanctioned the undertaking, and was conjunct thereunto.

When Maitland had read the compact, the other conspirators expressed their concurrence by heartily clapping their hands, and otherwise audibly declaring their readiness for the enterprize, which sounds and gestures so worked upon the spirit of the King, that with an agi-

tated bravery, he called for a pen and subscribed the bond of blood, to which all present successively affixed their signatures.

Morton and the other leaders in the combination, who had been wary in their wine, perceiving the danger of advancing farther into the business that night by the flushed and inflamed visages of their accessories, proposed an adjournment, and appointed the following evening for another meeting, to determine the time and place when their designs should be carried into effect. The fatal compact was entrusted to the keeping of Maitland, who, that no change in the King's mind might undo what had been done, immediately retired. He was soon after followed by the King; and the minor conspirators also went away, leaving only Morton and Ruthven together.

“My word!” said the Earl, when they were alone, “we hae made a brave stride to a gude end; but I hae my fears o’ the King’s firmness and fortitude. Did ye see how often he was wishy-washy, and how he had a hankering and hesitation to keep himself scaithless and out o’

harm's way if he could? But he's nailed now. Really he's after a' but a saft lad, and I am nane surprized that the Queen, who has hersel' sae meikle smeddum, has discerned his deficiencies. However, though he's failed by them wi' her, we'll no cast out about them."

"I doubt," replied Ruthven, "the propriety of bringing that boy Douglas amongst us."

"Ah!" said Morton, "ye little ken Geordie. Howsever, it wasna for himsel' but for his step-brother's sake. Naebody will think that the Earl of Murray was na ane o' our marrows, when they hear that his step-brother, a laddie, was in the secret."

"I would rather," rejoined Ruthven, "that we worked with less craft; and I can see no good reason why all these gatherings and meetings should take place, as if our just purpose were a black stratagem of traitors against their King."

"Na, Ruthven," said Morton, "to speak the truth, I dinna discern meikle difference in the matter; but ye see we wouldna be able to keep the King true to us by a' the incitements we

could employ, if we didna' keep the upper hand by giving him a glimpse o' our connections.

“ Well, it may be as you say, my Lord,” rejoined Ruthven; “ but plain ways are easy ways; and though I shall conform to whatever may be determined, I do not confide in so much mystery.”

CHAPTER XXXIII.

" Thus the pale snow-drop on the frosted plain
 Bows its fair crest beneath the wintry blast ;
 The vernal shower shall fall henceforth in vain,
 A fatal blight has nipped its roots at last,
 And all its beauty shall be soon o'erpast ;
 So Bertha drooped. CAUNTER.

AFTER the departure of Darnley for Edinburgh, Adelaide, at the particular request of the Queen, left the residence of Lady Kilburnie, and took up her abode at the Palace.

Towards her the kindness of the Queen was undiminished. On the contrary, it might be said to have been studiously increased ; but there was something in it which Adelaide felt was a change ; nor was she mistaken.

The Queen was conscious that Adelaide was innocent of the alienation of Darnley's affection ; she could not, however, but regard her as the cause of the blight under which she was suffer-

ing. Still her natural generosity would not permit her to evince the feeling by which she was affected; she fought against it, and endeavoured by studied and artificial attentions to compensate that falling off in her regard, which, in spite as it were of herself, made her almost dislike her favourite.

But as the preparations for the wedding were proceeding, and the celebration was only deferred till the arrival of Southennan's mother, Adelaide was content to endure without repining the formal attentions which the Queen substituted for her more gracious familiarity; and Mary herself felt less of the constraint which her unhappy condition imposed, by considering that it was to be exercised only for a short period.

While the mutation in the Queen's manner was particularly experienced by Adelaide, it was observed by all her Majesty's attendants that a shade of melancholy was darkening upon her. Her spirits, naturally gay and buoyant, began to subside into a pensive soberness, and her temper, always quick, was becoming capricious; few things appeared to interest her; she seemed

to seek seclusion, and often sequestered herself even from Adelaide for hours together, ruminating with a slow and thoughtful step as she walked alone in the garden, or sat on the battlements of the Palace, contemplating the surrounding beautiful portion of her kingdom, which to her fancy smiled and frowned as the clouds drifted on the wind.

Sometimes she ordered her litter, and proposed excursions along the banks of the lake under the Palace; but she seldom carried her intentions into effect. Her palfrey stood often ready for hours in the court-yard, but she rarely went abroad. It was manifest to all that her mind was unbalanced, and though the increasing paleness of her beauty could be accounted for by her maternal expectations, it was saddened with an expression which could never arise from a state wherein hope and anticipation were so intimately blended. All the symptoms of distaste and chagrin were distressingly visible in her looks, her actions, and in the sound of her voice. She was indeed a creature despondent and forlorn.

The religious controversies were quickening again throughout the kingdom; the grants and distributions of the dissolved monasteries had not secured that degree of attachment and obedience from those who received them which had been expected, and many who thought themselves entitled to equal favours were moody with discontent, deeming themselves unjustly neglected. It would indeed be difficult in the history of mankind, to point out an individual whose situation had so many claims on human sympathy as that of the Queen of Scots at this time. Adorned with surpassing grace, in the bloom of youth, she was yet rejected by her husband, on whom she had showered with the avish prodigality of youthful love the riches and royalty of her kingdom. Though to herself the scandal was unknown, the purity of her fame was sullied with base insinuations. Even her religion was regarded as prompting her to dissimulation and oppression. The hearts of her people were shrinking from her on all sides, and she felt as it were, by an increasing coldness, that she was daily left more and more alone.

Unable to withstand the keen sense of her increasing desolation she resolved to return to Holyrood, and to visit the old Countess of Morton in her journey. Accordingly, having directed the principal part of her suite to proceed to Edinburgh, she passed to Dalmahoy with Adélaide and a few attendants, among whom were Knockwhinnie and Southennan.

“I have come,” said she to the venerable dowager, who was apprized of her approach, and met her at the gate, “to entreat your kind maternal counsel, for my heart is heavy and my spirit sick. I will stay with you this night, and on the morrow perhaps you will come with me to Holyrood.”

“Your Highness again does me great honour. What I can do, Madam, for your comfort and solace, duty requires; but, alas! my will hath lost its energy; for I am made helpless by the ligatures with which Age, by its infirmities, has bound my limbs and faculties. I am even more ineffectual than were I fettered with manacles of iron; for these might be taken off, but mine never can. I have all the will but can give no

help; the consciousness of being feeble is strong upon me; I am like one who hath lost a limb, exposed to the pains that would have been felt in it had it remained, but uncompensated by any feeling of power even in illusion."

When she had conducted the Queen to the bower chamber, which she had so recently occupied, Mary entreated her to forget her rank, and to let her pass that evening as one who had come with charitable solicitations.

"It may not be," replied the old lady. "These things which your Highness would avoid, are part of the means which Providence hath ordained to mitigate the troubles that would otherwise be intolerable in high stations. Yet will I not altogether be disobedient. There shall be no banquet, nor any kind of revelry; but yet we shall not be without entertainment befitting the condition of your Majesty. There is in this house an aged crone, strangely possessed with a mystical persuasion that she can discern the seeds of events in futurity. She shall be called if your Highness so wills, and read some fond encouragement for your contentation, out of the book of fortune."

“Hath she indeed skill of that quality?” enquired the Queen, her eyes brightening with the febrile awe and dread of superstitious excitement.

“I give but little credence to those who dream they are possessed of such lore,” replied the Countess; “but I have seen her make marvelous instances both of mirth and sadness: she hath fished out secrets from bosoms that were as calm and deep as the pools of the river.”

“I should not like to hear my fortune told,” said the Queen, “lest she should tell me of coming evils, and thereby cause me to suffer twice. The prophetic alarm is as ill to bear as the come-to-pass.”

“She deals not always in the dismal.”

“Yet I will not hear her,” replied the Queen, thoughtfully; “for I have in the persuasion of my spirit a fearful foretaste of some disastrous doom. It makes me averse to consult the oracles of auguries and omens.”

The Countess sighed, for her experience had taught her that in such bodement there was often truth; and therefore she pressed her suggestion no further, but turned her discourse to

things of more feminine import. Still what she had said infected the Queen's mind, and in addition to the sentiment of real sorrow, suggested apprehensions too vague to be described, yet sufficiently intelligible to increase her mind's disease; and, in consequence, yielding to their influence, she expressed her intention to remain alone until supper time. The Countess reverentially ventured to remonstrate against such indulgence of her melancholy.

"Melancholy feeds itself," said she. "It is like one sentenced with a loaf and pitcher to perish in a dungeon. When the bread and water fail, he breaks into his own veins for nourishment to the life which the act to preserve it destroys."

CHAPTER XXXIV.

" I have a secret—but 'tis mine—

No word shall reach thine ear ;

'Tis buried in my heart's own shrine,

And locked in safety there."

BOWRING.

"DURING the time that the Queen remained alone, the Lady Morton, with Adelaide, Knock-whinnie, and Southennan, held a sorrowful communion on her unhappy situation. Various expedients were devised among them, by which they thought her afflictions might in some measure be mitigated: they were, however, but incompetent counsellors. The dowager alone seemed to have formed a right conception of what her Majesty's conduct towards the King should be: in her opinion a separation was the only alternative by which the thorns of her Majesty's pillow could be blunted.

"While they were thus expressing their sym-

pathy, old Elspeth came into the room, dressed as when she carried the train of her lady on the former occasion, and leaning on the ivory-headed staff already described.

“Wherefore,” said the dowager, “hast thou, Elspeth, so apparelled thyself? Hast thou not heard that I have directed the household, by the command of her Highness, to make no change in the methods of the family. The Queen is indisposed, and cannot by reason thereof abide the performance of the homage due to her dignity.”

The crouched and deformed old woman held up her right hand, with the forefinger only extended, and waved it three or four times in silence before her face.

“What wouldst thou, Elspeth?” said Knock-whinnie, on whom her mysterious gesture made the deepest impression. “What wouldst thou warn us of by so waving thy finger, and looking beyond us, as if thou hadst a sight of something invisible to other eyes?”

She made no immediate answer, but after looking at him, she began to chatter her teeth, and to

utter a shrill disagreeable sound of laughter, mingled with screeching so harsh and hideous that it made Adelaide shudder.

“Cease Elspeth!” exclaimed the Countess. “Thou knowest I cannot abide the grating of thy discordant voice, when thou wouldst make mirth. What stirs thee at this time to be so moved?”

The crone, without any explanation, looked again at Knockwhinnie, and was a second time seemingly inclined to laugh at him, if that could be called laughter which was almost hideous. On this occasion the Countess also smiled, and said to Knockwhinnie that Elspeth foresaw he was likely to meet with some laughable mishap; but Elspeth said,

“No, I laugh to think how he will run if he can escape.”

“Where—from what?” enquired Southennan, on whom the wizard wildness of the old woman’s physiognomy was beginning to make some impression. She, however, took no notice of his question, but turning to Adelaide, regarded her for some time with a pleased and mild aspect.

“ Good fortune, young lady,” said the Countess, “ assuredly awaits you. I have not seen so much brightness on Elspeth’s countenance for many a day.”

This loose conversation having continued for some time, the Dowager was on the point of requesting Elspeth to retire, when, without notice, the Queen came into the room, and surprised them by the alteration which in the course of the short interval had taken place in her appearance. Elspeth shrinkingly withdrew into a remote corner of the room, and placing her clasped hands on the ivory ball which crowned the top of her staff, she rested her chin upon them, and peered from under her brows at the Queen for some time before she was observed. Mary herself was the first who noticed the searching inquest of her small vivid and suspicious eyes. At first, being harassed at the moment in her own mind, she evinced no disposition to notice Elspeth more particularly, but the Countess was displeased at what she considered the indecorous freedom of the old woman, and indicated by a frown and a significant shaking of the head, her displeasure ;

she then moved her hand and pointed to the door. Elspeth, however, heeded not the admonition, but continued resting her chin upon her hands, grasping the ball, and seemingly insensible to the presence of every object but the Queen. In one respect it could not be said that any of the party was surprised at the solemnity with which she regarded the Queen, for their own reverence for Majesty accorded with the expression of that sentiment. The Queen herself, however, soon discovered that Elspeth was actuated by a deeper and more awful sentiment than deference to royalty, and the Countess, who also observed it, apprehensive that it might give rise to some ill-timed expression, somewhat more emphatically indicated her desire that she should leave the room, but without effect, for the old woman stood as it were entranced, until the Queen said,

“Is this the person, Lady Morton, to whom you alluded as a wonderful fortune-teller? I wish for no proof of her skill. Come hither, nurse, and take this ring as thy fee. When I

have time I will then listen to thee, but at present I have no mind for fantastical metaphysics."

Elspeth came crippling forward, and accepted the ring, which she was on the point of placing on her finger, when she suddenly turned round and addressed herself, as if some person was visible near her.

"Ha!" she exclaimed, leaning on her staff, and with her left hand uplifted as in amazement, "What would you here?"

"Whom dost thou speak to?" cried the Queen with emotion; "there is no one near thee, nor standing there."

"It is so," replied Elspeth, "I nevertheless saw him."

"I prithee, good nurse, not to fool me; I have no fancy this night for such fables: go as I have said. Some other time I may be in the mood to listen, but to-night my thoughts obey far graver influences than maidenly curiosity."

Elspeth was on the point of moving away, when after having taken one step towards the door, she suddenly halted, and again eagerly and fearfully appeared to contemplate the Queen.

Mary, whose temperament was but slightly affected, on ordinary occasions, by pretensions to supernatural knowledge, nevertheless experienced a change on her spirit, arising from some cause inscrutable and darkling as the influence of the moon upon the sea, and with a tremulous voice she said to the dowager,

“ Verily, she will constrain me to ask questions the answers to which I dread.”

But before a reply could be given, Elspeth again looked steadily upon the vacancy, and repeated—

“ What wouldst thou here?”

In all this scene with Elspeth there was a mystery and strangeness, resistless and wonderful; but the Queen, recovering her self-possession, resolved it should be ended, and with something more severe in her manner than she had ever before seemed capable of expressing, she desired Elspeth to retire, and to refrain from the practice of such mummery in her presence. The old woman turned suddenly with a glare upon her, and chattering her teeth, and uttering that hideous gabble with which she expressed both displeasure and enjoyment, then withdrew.

“That goblin thing,” said the Queen, “hath made me more sensible of terror than aught of common humanity hath ever done before. She is malignant, and hath satisfaction in irritating the antipathy which her deformities excite. She is withal cunning, and doubtless has some purpose in practising these preternatural extravagances.”

“Your Highness hath well discerned her peculiar craft. We have ever regarded her as somewhat deficient in the common faculties of our nature, but ever and anon she hath shown such glimpses of marvellous understanding, that she hath been for many years accounted among the household as one that hath the power of some unknown gift.”

“She hath art,” replied the Queen. “Can any one have set her on to this; for what hath chanced, that she should assume so much of the sybil?”

The dowager appeared to be struck with the remark, and said,

“I am awed by the discernment of your Highness, and I beseech you to sift my son well

as to this. She was his nurse, and ever since it was supposed that she was afflicted with the saddening perception of things uncome, he hath worked strange pranks by her agency. I am almost persuaded by what your Highness has discovered, that in these fits and trances she hath been set on by him to make mirth, when the emptiness of the prognostications shall have been disclosed."

If it hath been so," said the Queen indignantly, "it may not pass unblamed: doubtless it hath had relation to some dark design. Why these warnings, and admonitions, and prophecies? Verily, Madam, let him know that I have reason to think ill enough of the world, without the aid of miracles, to work me into suspicions of the intents of some about me."

In saying these words, the supper-bell being then ringing, she took hold of Adelaide by the arm and walked into the adjoining room, where the repast was set out.

CHAPTER XXXV.

“ Heart ! then be cautious, nor attend
To whispering wiles nor slippery friend.”

BOWRING.

ON the evening after the return of Knockwhinnie with Adelaide and Southennan to Edinburgh, the former was surprised by a message from the Earl of Morton, requesting to see him with all convenient expedition.

“ I hae been greedy to see you,” said the Earl, as Knockwhinnie entered his room. “ Come away, and let us have a douce crack, and twa friendly words thegither ; for na doubt ye have heard of the dule and trouble that’s likely to come out o’ that fule-affair anent your daughter and the King. Its neo thought to be a’ owing to some stratagem of that wily deevil, Dauvit the Italian. Sit down, and tell me

sincerely, as an auld friend, if it be true that he has been trying to cut out Southennan."

Knockwhinnie knew not well what to make of this, nor to what it tended; but he answered frankly, that he had never heard any thing of the kind.

"In truth, my Lord," said he, "Rizzio is no great favourite amongst us; and the attempt would have been fruitless had he ever made it."

"Weel, that's just my opinion," replied the Earl, "no man that has a right respect for himself would hae any thing to say to the crafty crotchet. He's unfathomable, Knockwhinnie. An angel o' light is no able to wind through the labyrinth of his dark devices. It was an evil day that brought him amongst us. Do n't you think so too?"

"Truly, my Lord, I take so little interest in the concerns of the Court, that I may safely say I scarcely know whether he is or is not justly blamed for pride and arrogance—the worst faults that I have yet heard imputed to him; except indeed that the Queen favours him with her confidence to the disparagement of elder counsellors."

“ Nane of your jeers, Knockwhinnie; weel ye ken wi’ me that would never be a fault! But if I didna ken you for a sedate considerate man, ne’er doing any thing in a hurry, I wouldna tell you what I’m half inclined to do.”

“ I’ll pledge my honour, my Lord, that what you tell me will lie as dumb and quiet in my breast, as the dead in the grave, till you give me permission to set it free.”

“ That I dinna misdoubt, Knockwhinnie; but it surprises me to hear ye hae sic a warm side to that foreign loon. Really, if ye dinna draw aff frae him, and eschew him as if he were a yird tead, I’ll no’ say what may be the upshot; for it’s true what I tell you, that he’ll no’ be lang permitted to rule wi’ sic a rod o’ iron our auld nobility, in the manner he has for a time past done.”

“ Although, my Lord, I cannot say that I think he is just a Joseph in Egypt, I am bound to acknowledge that he has always been very civil to me and mine.”

“ Weel, that’s just like yoursel, Knockwhinnie; ye’re a saft-hearted man o’ the auld, and

no' very hard in the head, or ye wouldna entertain sic an affection for Dauvit. Surely ye hae lost some o' your natural discernment, that ye're sae contented to thole the snool and snub o' the likes o' Dauvit Ritchie; tuts, I should say Rizzio."

"Excuse me, my Lord," replied Knockwhinnie, after a short pause; "what is the drift of all this you have been saying to me about Rizzio? It is plain, my Lord, you have a purpose; and without offence I may venture to say, after what you have been telling me, that you want my help. Now, my Lord, it is not necessary to go forward in such a roundabout manner. I have few friends of an older standing; and I trust, that without much soliciting, your Lordship would get my help in any cause on this side of honesty."

"Thank ye, Knockwhinnie; thank you! What mair could I reasonably expect, seeing that ye're sae knit up wi' Dauvit? But still I'm no' sure if what I would hae you to help me in is worth asking you to take the trouble o'."

“If it be any thing to serve you, my Lord, speak not of trouble, but account me ready, and abiding your call.”

“Then,” said the Earl, “I’ll tell you; but be sure ye keep it secret. Ye hae heard what the King fears anent the confidentiality between her Majesty and Dauvit?”

“I have,” replied Knockwhinnie, drily.

“Now it’s thought that the shortest way of quenching his jealousy is to send Dauvit out o’ the way.”

“My Lord!” exclaimed Knockwhinnie.

“Hoot toot, hoot toot, man, but ye’re bloody-minded! I could wager a plack to a bawbee that ye’re thinking that Dauvit, *puir chielde*! is to be slaughtered. Man, but ye hae black thoughts! Canna a vagabond o’ a’ lands be sent out o’ this kingdom in a French ship frae the pier and shore o’ Leith wi’ a whole skin?”

“It is not impossible,” replied Knockwhinnie, gravely; “but until I hear more of the intention, I can say nothing.”

“Hech! but ye hae learned scrupulousity

since I first kent ye. Hows'ever, it's but right what ye hae said, and I'll be candid. It's pac-tioned atween twa or three o' us to catch Dauvit when he little thinks o't, and to carry him down, and put him on board the Burdوخ trader which is now in Leith roads, and to send him forth the kingdom, before the Queen kens any thing about it. In short, Knockwhinnie," said the Earl, lowering his voice into solemnity, "the Queen's honour needs it for a prevention; and can you refuse to serve her?"

"To the extent of helping to send him out of the country, I have but little compunction; but if he make resistance, what then?"

"What then!" echoed Morton; "we'll tak' the life o' him."

"I'll have nothing to do with it!" said Knockwhinnie, firmly.

"Oh!" said Morton, "ye needna make a midge a mountain. It's no' likely that he'll daur to resist; and a' that I want you and a few other friends to do, is to be in the way when the job's a-doing, to keep the Palace quiet; that the Queen and her ladies may not be cast into the

vapours if a stracmash should happen to arise."

"My Lord Morton, I devoutly wish," replied Knockwhinnie, "that you had not broken this matter to me: for although it may be done without guilt, yet it cannot be done without offending the Queen; and for her kindness to my daughter, to say nothing of what duty and loyalty require, I am deeply her debtor."

The Earl made no immediate answer, but rose and took two or three turns across the room, and then said, with a stern and knotted brow,

"I am mista'en in you, Knockwhinnie, and I have told you too much: but ye'll either take a part in our stratagem, or I'll find a way to cut short this new prudence. Do ye understand me?"

"Perfectly, my Lord."

"And what, then, is your decision?"

"To abide as I am."

"That'll no' be allowed, Knockwhinnie: think o' what you're about."

Knockwhinnie appeared a little agitated at

the menace, which, more by his scowl than his words, Morton expressed; but he said firmly,

“ You have heard my decision, my Lord; and if the business for which you sent for me be finished, I shall bid your Lordship good night.”

The Earl was disturbed at the unexpected firmness and resolution with which his proposal was rejected, and appeared in manifest perplexity. At last he said,

“ Then you ’ll no’ even assist to keep the house quiet? ”

“ Perhaps,” replied Knockwhinnie, “ I might be consenting to that; but altogether it is a business I would fain shun.”

“ Ye’re o’er far,” said the Earl, “ in the secrets o’ our purpose to let you aff; and ye must undertake to bear a part in the ploy, or I must consult my marrows.”

“ My Lord,” replied Knockwhinnie, “ if I am to be driven, I must consult my friends, too.”

Morton again took a turn round the room, and, clapping his hands thrice, three of his

stoutest servants entered the room. Knock-whinnie stood aghast, and looked fiercely at the Earl; but there was no further interchange of speech between them, for the Earl hastily quitted the room.

CHAPTER XXXVI.

“Coming events cast their shadows before.”

CAMPBELL.

SOUTHENNAN, during the time that Knockwhinnie was with Morton, had walked to the Unicorn to see some of his general acquaintance there, expecting to find Rizzio among them, and to learn something from him as to the temper of the King towards himself; but on reaching the tavern, he found it deserted, the guests were scattered abroad, and Balwham the host said that Rizzio had not been in the house since his return from Linlithgow.

“I marvel,” said Balwham, “what has come o’er him. Ye had awfu’ doings there, and folk say that he’s an altered man sin syne. Proud he was before, and as upsetting as a game cock,

but he wasna without a pleasant jocosity to humble folk, like me. I'm sure, if scaith has be-fa'n him, he hasna a friend that'll be mair concerned than mysel'. But something to a certy has come o'er him, for they say he gangs like a ghaist at uncanny hours in the King's Park. I'm wae for him!"

This information did not surprise Southennan, who had himself noticed the change which was thus become so public; but it made him more anxious to see Rizzio, while he forgot that his errand related only to his own affairs. Accordingly he went towards Holyrood, and in approaching the portal he saw by the bright moonlight Rizzio coming out alone, and passing on towards the King's Park.

Although the night air was cold, Southennan followed him, and with an increased pace. Rizzio at the same moment also hastened on. Southennan hesitated, thinking that he had observed him coming and wished to avoid him; but at the same moment Rizzio also halted. This encouraged Southennan again to mend his pace, and he was rather offended to perceive that the Ita-

lian again stepped out. He increased his pace, and Rizzio did the same.

“ This is strange ! ” said Southennan to himself, and halted a third time.

Rizzio had now nearly reached the corner of the garden wall, not more than twenty paces distant and a-head of Southennan, where he also stopped. Southennan in some degree of chagrin, called him by name, and moved forward, but he received no answer. Rizzio in the same moment turned the corner and disappeared. Southennan, however, still pursued him, but on arriving at the corner of the wall, though the moon shone clear, and all within the range of the Park was as visible as at noon, the Italian was not seen there. Southennan looked for some time around, and an inexplicable awe fell upon him; he then returned towards the Palace. He had not, however, proceeded many steps, when he again discovered Rizzio walking in the shadow of the wall. This unexpected circumstance at once increased the dread which he felt, and prompted him to rush forward, but

when he was again within a short distance of the figure before him, it disappeared.

“Is it his wraith!” exclaimed Southenman, in the low hollow voice of fear. “It can be nothing else,” and he stood as it were spell-bound on the spot, throbbing with a dread, which, without any sentiment of pusillanimity, was profounder than the horror of ensnared cowardice.

His emotion did not last long: he walked towards the Palace, expecting to see the apparition a third time, but he was disappointed.

The state of his feelings was such that he did not proceed to Rizzio’s apartment, as he had originally intended, but went pensively homeward. Scarcely had he ascended half way up the Canon-gate, when his spirits having rallied, he condemned himself for yielding to what he began to think could only be an illusion of his own mind, and suddenly turning round, resolved to satisfy his curiosity by seeing Rizzio. Accordingly he went back to the Palace, and was presently at the door of his apartment. He knocked, but was not admitted; hearing, however, by a rustle that some one was within, he knocked again. Rizzio himself then came to the door, holding in

his hand a candle, which by the long unsnuffed wick, appeared to have been neglected.

“Come in,” said the Italian; “I am glad to see a human face; for I have been asleep, and had such dreams that I dare not, from the horror with which they still affect me, venture to recollect them.”

Southennan’s superstitious dread returned upon him, and he sat down unbidden, and said, with a dry and husky throat,

“Of what did you dream?”

“Of nothing describable: a horror, a sound, a shadow; omens and prodigious things, like the spectral vapour of a witch’s cauldron, wherein forms and effigies gleam and flit and speak, while the shape and nature of them is shrouded in palpable obscurity. I am shaken, I know not wherefore, nor by what; but I feel myself touched in the spirit with a coldness as intense as death. Ha! can it be the third omen?”

“What omen? of what do you speak?”

Rizzio then recounted to him the prediction of Chatelard on the evening before his execution, and the still more appalling prophecy of

the oracular Elspeth. Southennan's blood was frozen with the tale; but he had sufficient command of himself not to divulge the sight that he had seen in the Park. He only remarked, with affected indifference, while he shuddered at venturing to equivocate on such a subject, that it was thought to argue but little knowledge of philosophy to account dreams of more import than the trackless metaphors which pass through the mind in our waking hours, like ships on the sea, or birds in the air, or the fantastic wrack which resolves itself into thin air and perishes from the sight, even while it is contemplated. Rizzio himself assented seemingly to that opinion, as he said,

“I am sensible that the formless horror still stands beside me, and I cannot drive it away.”

While they were thus speaking, Hughoc came in search of his master, with a request from Knockwhinnie that he would come to him without delay. In delivering his message something bewildered and fearful appeared in the looks of the lad, such as he had often worn in the romance and novelty of his first visit to Edinburgh, but which his master had not ob-

served for a long time. Without many words, as the summons was urgent, Southennan bade Rizzio good night, and followed Hughoc.

“Oh, Sir!” cried the lad, in a tone of extreme terror; “I wasna sent by Knockwhinnie; I come o’ my ain thought, and I hope ye’ll forgie the lee.”—

“What has happened?” cried his master.

“Na, I’ll just, Sir, tell you the truth in a plain way, if ye’ll hae patience. Ye see, being late and having gotten my supper, I was daunting wi’ Johnnie Gaff and one o’ Lethington’s flunkies to get a chappin in Lucky Bicker’s public, when ganging through a dark closs, a dismal wynd, and a lang entry, I heard a voice in a struggle up a turnpike stair; sae I mounted to see what it was, and by a blink o’ the moon in at the window, I beheld four ruffian fallows oxtering a man that was geggit; and wha was he but Knockwhinnie! They opened a door wi’ a key, and carried him in; which sae frightened me, for it was a dungeon-like dwelling, that I came running in quest o’ you. ’Od, Sir, we’re again in the net o’ perplexities!”

This intelligence amazed Southennan, and he walked with Hughoc eagerly to the spot, on arriving at which he found that the staircase belonged to the Earl of Morton's lodging, a tall house which overlooked the Cowgate, and had three or four stories under the level of the High Street. Unable to divine what could have happened to cause Knockwhinnie to be so treated, he went, notwithstanding the lateness of the hour, at once to the Earl's door, to demand an explanation; for he could not doubt that the outrage was some machination of his. But the door was cautiously opened, by an aged female with a small iron lamp in her hand, who, to his question, replied that the Earl was at supper with the King in the Palace, and would not be back until far in the night; perhaps not until morning.

CHAPTER XXXVII.

“ For Jupiter the lustrous lordeth now,
 And the dark work complete of preparation
 He draws by force into the realm of light.”

COLERIDGE.

SOUTHENNAN quitted the door of the Earl of Morton's lodgings in great perplexity. He felt that something should be done to release Knockwhinnie from his incarceration ; but in the midst of his reflections, the fearful idea of having seen the wraith of Rizzio swallowed up every other anxiety, so absorbing are the dismal feelings associated with preternatural things.

His mind was in a state of awful oscillation, swinging as it were between human dangers and metaphysical mysteries ; he could not control the confusion into which apprehension hurried his thoughts, and he was agitated both with reason-

able and inexplicable fears, as if shaken with the ecstasies of a crisis. The paroxysm, however, was too violent to last long, and the perils with which Adelaide was surrounded soon absorbed all other considerations. He could discern no other effectual mode of protecting her, but by completing their marriage without delay, and conveying her to England or to France. Accordingly, he resolved not to wait the arrival of his mother, to have the ceremony performed in the course of the next day, and to proceed immediately after to the west country with his bride.

Upon this resolution another question supervened—what was to be done for her father? The manner in which he had been treated, showed that his life was not sought, but for what offence had he deserved such ignominious treatment, and beneath the roof of Morton too, whom he had been accustomed to regard as one of Knockwhinnie's oldest and truest friends? It was an occurrence which puzzled his comprehension: the more he thought on it, the deeper obscurity seemed to involve it; till at last, unable to come to any satisfactory conclusion, he determined,

notwithstanding the lateness of the hour, to return to the Palace and acquaint Adelaide with the situation of her father, and to advise her to report the affair at once to the Queen.

He reached the Palace before her Majesty had retired for the night, and obtained a hasty interview with Adelaide; who, greatly disturbed by his information, went directly to the Queen. Her Majesty was scarcely less troubled, but with her superior decision of character, she met the intelligence with more resolute equanimity.

Knowing that Morton, with several other Lords who were accounted the particular associates of Darnley, were then at supper in the Palace, she sent a peremptory request for the Earl to come to her immediately. A command so sudden and decided struck the company with one common feeling of amazement, and Morton at once obeyed the summons.

On entering into the Queen's presence, he found only her Majesty and Adelaide; and the latter in such a state of dejection that his conscience at once told him that she must have heard something of the outrage committed on her fa-



ther. Nor was he allowed to remain long in doubt on the subject.

“My Lord Morton,” said the Queen with an energy that was almost impassioned, “this lady is suffering much distress on her father’s account, who is imprisoned in your house; why is it that you have ventured to treat him so? Set him at liberty without delay.”

Morton could not conceal his consternation; his colour changed; his agitation became visible; and when he attempted to speak, his lips quivered, and his speech faltered.

“No words, my Lord, but let it be done instantly!” cried the Queen, becoming more animated.

Morton at last mustered presence of mind enough to reply, “It wouldna be ill to comply wi’ your commands, if the ploy were as your Majesty has been deceived to think.”

The Queen, perceiving that he was evading her command, said angrily, “My Lord, Knock-whinnie is imprisoned in your house. Let him be rendered to me within the hour. I wait till it is done.”

The Earl bowed without speaking, and was about to retire.

“Stop!” said the Queen. “You shall not quit this apartment. Send your orders by Southennan: he is in the Palace, and you cannot have a fitter messenger.”

This injunction doubled the confusion of Morton. He could not expect that Southennan would see Knockwhinnie without becoming acquainted with what had passed between them, and an exposure of the whole plot seemed inevitable. This consideration, and the lofty determination of the Queen, completely mastered him. He was unable to reply to her reiteration that Southennan should be sent to bring Knockwhinnie, and his agitation became so overwhelming, that he was ready to sink into the earth; when just in this vortex and whirlpool of agitation, Darnley precipitately came into the room, and roughly enquired why it was that his guests had been disturbed, and Morton so abruptly withdrawn from the table.

The appearance of Darnley, his eyes flashing, and his visage inflamed, was offensive and

menacing; but the Queen, in answer to his impetuosity, replied, with contemptuous coolness,

“When your Majesty has received authority to be so categorical, you shall then be answered.”

Darnley gave a vehement stamp, that shook the room, and abandoned himself to the wildest unbridled rage. She however paid no attention to his violence, but, turning to Morton, repeated her command. The Earl, in some measure emboldened by the presence of the King, seemed at first disposed to forego the courtesy with which he always had hitherto regarded her, and answered with unbecoming brevity. But she at once rebuked and silenced him, by calling aloud to the attendants in the anti-chamber to order in the guards.

Both Darnley and Morton stood aghast; they looked at one another: even Adelaide trembled; for the Queen's indignation, roused to its height, appeared fraught with some extraordinary issue. The crafty genius of Morton, however, though cowed, was not subdued: he rallied his self-possession, and, with well-feigned jocularly, broke out into loud laughter, entreated her Majesty's

pardon, and, with his best humour and eccentricity, boldly ventured to make light of her anger. But she was not in a mood to be turned by such an artifice; she saw through it; and the guards who had been summoned, coming into the anti-chamber, she directed a party of them to remain for her protection. Such promptitude far exceeded every idea that either the King or the Earl had formed of her spirit and resolution; but the former made an attempt to regain the mastery, by ordering the guards to retire.

“ Hold ! ” exclaimed the Queen ; “ I command here ! ”

By this time, the bustle of calling the guards had roused the Palace ; and the King’s guests, as well as the officers and servants of the household, filled the anti-chamber and the adjacent rooms. Morton, perceiving that it was in vain to resist the storm, yielded.

“ Wi’ your Majesty’s will,” said he, “ I’ll immediately cause Knockwhinnie to be found ; but this squall should be first calmed, for it’s

no' befitting your royal dignity that there should be such hurricanes in the Palace."

The Queen had herself been taken by surprise at seeing the crowd gather so fast, and gladly acceded to the proposal : the guards were ordered to withdraw.

CHAPTER XXXVIII.

“ My soul is troubled with an ancient sorrow,
Which grows again anew; and gloomy themes,
Gathering afresh, o’ershadow me with dreams
Of a mysterious darkness on the morrow.”

BOWRING.

WHEN Adelaide went to inform the Queen of the disaster which had happened to her father, Southennan quitted the Palace, and proceeded towards the Unicorn, there to ascertain, if he could, the origin of the quarrel between Knockwhinnie and the Earl of Morton; directing Hughoc, at the same time, to go in quest of Johnnie Gaff, that the necessary means might be concerted for the deliverance of his master.

Johnnie was found with Rough Tam at Marion Bicker’s fireside; and both of them, on hearing of the new jeopardy into which Knockwhinnie had fallen, were so instigated by her

ale, that they proposed to rescue him outright. Accordingly, having procured some two or three other worthies of equal valour, they proceeded to the Earl's lodgings. On reaching the door in the lower part of the house, into which the prisoner had been carried, they tapped softly, and stood in silence. A voice within, before opening, inquired who was there, and Rough Tam answered.

His voice being known to the person within, the door was opened. The liberators rushed forward, and Knockwhinnie was soon at liberty. He accompanied Hughoc to the Unicorn, where Southennan was waiting, not anticipating the success of such a prompt enterprise.

Southennan and Knockwhinnie then proceeded towards the Palace, which they reached in the midst of the confusion described in the last chapter. In the course of their walk thither, Knockwhinnie partly described what had passed between him and Morton; but the obligation of his promise restrained him from speaking of the combination for the expulsion of Rizzio. They both, however, agreed that Knock-

whinnie was not safe in remaining in Edinburgh, until the hostility of Morton could be appeased. To Southennan the hazard did not appear so imminent; but Knockwhinnie was fully aware how much the possession of the secret exposed him to the animosity of the Earl and all his accomplices; and therefore, on reaching the Palace, it was agreed that Knockwhinnie should proceed to Leith, and conceal himself there till the following evening, while Southennan went in to acquaint Adelaide with what had happened.

Rizzio, in the mean time, having been informed of the scene which had taken place between her Majesty and Morton, was greatly troubled. The imprisonment of Knockwhinnie was to him an inconceivable mystery: no circumstances within his knowledge could explain it; and yet he was unaccountably persuaded that it was somehow interwoven with his own fortunes; for his feelings were at this time like those of a sentenced man, and he ruminated with the grudge of the oppressed, that he should be placed, without the sense of fault, in a situation where ruin in its darkest forms impended over him. He knew

that the growing power of the Protestants was fast making head against the Catholic party, and from that source alone he was convinced some direful catastrophe would probably soon overtake him; and this presentiment, or more properly, conviction, when he retired to his chamber for the night, threw him into a state of heaviness in which apathy more than serenity prevailed. At last he fell asleep, but it was a fitful unrefreshing drowse, often scared by ill-omened dreams. Towards the morning, by some gentle influence of the cool air he fell into a profound and salutary slumber, in which the pleasing echoes and reflections of early joyous youth made him almost feel, when he awoke, as if the hilarity of boyhood had been renewed. He wondered at his own light-heartedness, and tried to persuade himself that the fears and cares which had for so many days hung upon his spirit were only phantasma, the vapours of some indisposition, and formed of such stuff as dreams are made of. It thus happened, when at the accustomed hour he went to receive his daily instructions from the Queen, that he wore a

happier countenance than usual ; a circumstance which she noticed, and inquired what good fortune had chanced to him, alluding slightly at the same time to the disasters by which she was herself afflicted, adding,

“ But come in the evening, when I may be better able to confer with you, for my poor head hath been much shaken by the disturbance of last night. I shall pass the day in private, for truly I am not well, and would be spared till supper-time, when you will bring your missives, and expound to me their import.”

Rizzio felt, that to be thus invited to such privacy and confidence by her Majesty, was the greatest honour she had yet conferred upon him, and he left her with a buoyant elation of heart that seemed to lift him above himself, and to give him the assurance of undecaying prosperity.

Far different was the impression which the knowledge of this invitation produced in the Palace, where it was generally known that the Queen had, during the turbulent scene with Lord Morton, expressed, as it was reported, the

most indignant aversion at the conduct of Darnley.

All day the King held himself in seclusion; to Morton and Ruthven only was he accessible; while Southennan and Adelaide were preparing for their marriage, which, from the entangled state both of Knockwhinnie's affairs and his own, it was determined should be celebrated that night privately in the Palace-chapel. His own concerns in consequence, though few and simple, still so engaged his attention that he had no leisure to observe any particular preparations afoot about the Palace; but towards the evening he observed several retainers, in the livery of Morton and Ruthven, lingering in the King's Park, a circumstance without particularly interesting him, was yet so remarkable as to attract his attention.

Information of the hour appointed for the secret celebration of the marriage, [it was the Queen's supper hour,] having been conveyed to Knockwhinnie in his concealment, he also noticed, in coming to be present, the groups of armed men, but was at no loss to divine the

cause which brought them together; still however, believing that no serious harm was meant to Rizzio, beyond removing him from the kingdom, he deemed it wisest in him, considering his own interesting circumstances at that time, to take no part in the business, but to leave the Italian to his fate. Accordingly, acting on this determination, though dissatisfied with himself for being so indifferent, he went straight to the chapel to await there the coming of the bride and bridegroom. As they were both Catholics the Queen's confessor had agreed to unite them.

He had not been long in the chapel, which he found open and empty, when the confessor came in, followed by two priests with tapers, and two boys carrying censers. They lingered near the western door, and he stood with his back leaning against the railing of the altar musing on the various chances which had befallen him, and soothed by the solemn aspect of the place and the ponderous vaulted roof looking tranquillity.

CHAPTER XXXIX.

“ The developement
Of this affair approaches.”

THE Queen had intended to honour the nuptials with her presence, but her feelings on that evening were not in unison with an occasion so joyous; and in consequence, after having taken leave of Adelaide, she retired to her dressing-room, and directed the Countess of Argyle, with two of her other ladies, and Rizzio, to attend her at supper.

At the appointed hour, Southennan and Adelaide, with the Lady Mary Livingstone as her bridesmaid, without other attendants, went to the Chapel. In passing along the passage in the interior of the Palace, which led to it, Southen-

nan observed with awe a number of armed men, together with George Douglas and several of the King's associates, standing in the court of the Palace, and he naturally wondered on what intent they could be there assembled ; for Knockwhinnie, interdicted by his promise to Morton, had not divulged the conspiracy even as we have said to Southennan, under that impression of false honour which in those days regarded a vow or promise as equally obligatory, whether it related to good or evil.

On entering the chapel, a small procession was formed, in the van of which the two boys walked towards the altar, swinging their censers. The confessor and the two priests followed, chaunting an anthem, accompanied by the organ ; and the bride and bridegroom followed. Knockwhinnie and the Lady Mary Livingstone came in the rear.

When they had reached the railing in front of the altar, the organ and the singing ceased ; at which, by some unaccountable sympathy, the whole party started, and gazed at one another. Presently a strange noise was heard without, and a rustling and clank of arms.

At that moment the conspirators were assembling at the garden door which opened to the private stairs leading to the room where the Queen and her guests were sitting at supper.

The pause in the solemnity was but momentary; the confessor stepped within the railing and commenced the rites. He had not, however, proceeded far, when a strong blast of wind shook the whole chapel, drove in one of the windows behind the altar, and extinguished many of the lights; causing the escutcheons of the dead and the banners of the Knights of the Thistle to shake and flutter as if some preternatural influence were upon them. This accident appalled the confessor. He considered it a portentous omen to the bride and bridegroom: even the jocund spirit of the Lady Mary Livingstone was smitten with awe, and she clung trembling and alarmed to Knockwhinnie. The bride also trembled, and grasped the arm of Southennan, who alone was self-collected, and bade the confessor go on. Scarcely, however, was the ceremony resumed, when the sound of men in armour was again heard distinctly rattling on the outside.

of the Chapel, and by the broken window behind the altar, voices of whispering in low, earnest, and stifled accents, were distinctly heard. This, however, excited no particular attention, and the confessor proceeded.

As he repeated the second sentence of the prayer, a wild shriek arose without, and the pattering of many hurrying feet within the passage by which the chapel communicated with the Palace, indicated some confusion there; Knockwhinnie evidently listened in dread.

“Go on!” cried Southennan, with an eager and alarmed voice, to the confessor; and Knockwhinnie grasped the rails of the altar, with convulsive fortitude. The noise without increased. It was a deep, troubled, and suppressed sound, a smothered tumult, but it did not again interrupt the ceremony.

When the confessor was about to pronounce the benediction, a dreadful cry from within the Palace echoed through the aisles and vaults of the chapel, and a rushing confusion and the clashing of arms roused anxiety into terror.

“Finish, finish!” exclaimed Southennan, un-

able to control his emotion. Knockwhinnie stood listening, as if all ear, heedless of the solemn rites in which he had so profound an interest.

The noise was now so audible that the voices of those on the outside who were engaged in the tumult, could be recognised, although muffled as it were with a hoarse vehemence. The confessor abruptly and with an agitated voice pronounced the benediction; at the conclusion of which, George Douglas was heard exclaiming, on the outside,

“ Be silent ! It is done. He is dead ! ”

And presently, as it were in sympathy, the great bell of the Abbey began to toll; a fearful trumpet shattered the air; and the sound of a multitude gathering, rose louder and louder. The dissonance of many tumultuous sounds soon, however, subsided; and instead of bustle and altercation, a low solemn murmuring, the churm of dread and communion, gradually succeeded and deepened around.

Such were the circumstances in which the nuptials of Southennan and Adelaide were con-

cluded. The terrific tragedy of Rizzio's murder at the same time stained the Palace with indelible blood. It is unnecessary to describe his catastrophe, but History has not yet surpassed the crime.

When the crowd which the alarm collected around the Palace began to disperse, Southennan conducted his bride from the chapel, and Knockwhinnie led the trembling Lady Mary Livingstone back to her royal mistress, whose misfortunes from that æra trode fatally fast upon the heels of each other; but it is no part of our task to describe them, nor to illustrate the mysteries which followed. Fiction, over the doom of Darnley and the fortunes of the Scottish Queen, acknowledges the superior wonders of Truth.

On the dismal morning after the death of Rizzio, Southennan, with his bride and her father, left Edinburgh for ever. They hastened to his residence in the West country, where after a few needful preparations, they embarked with his mother and household for England; and the home of his fathers gradually fell into

decay. The memory of its original inhabitants faded in the recollection of the neighbourhood; and all that is preserved concerning their story is a vague tradition, that, being the last of Queen Mary's Papists, they went to France after her dismal execution, and were heard of no more.

GLOSSARY.

A.

Ae, one.

Ahint, behind.

Ain, own.

Aince, once.

Almous, alms.

Aneath, beneath.

Art and part, a Scotch law phrase, meaning an accessory.

Atweel, 'tis as well, or 'tis well.

Aught, or *aucht*, possession.

Aumry, cupboard.

Ay, always.

Ayont, beyond.

B.

Bailie, a magistrate, second in rank in a Scotch Royal Burgh, the same as an Alderman of London. Dr. Jamieson, on the authority of Blind Harry's Wallace, adds another definition—a mistress. It would seem that even in the days of

Blind Harry bailies were slandered with being old wifish; we disclaim, however, having used the word in this sense in the text, and declare it is used *in melioribus sensu tantum*.

Bairn, child.

Bardy scoot, a pert girl.

Bawbee, halfpenny.

Bawk, beam of a house.

Beer mell, mallet for bruising bere or big.

Beglammour, to use a charm.

Belyve, by-and-by.

Besom, broom.

Bicker, a wooden bowl for containing liquor. It is also now used for any sort of drinking utensils. It is evident the word *bickering*, meaning contention, strife, and actual fighting, sprung from the effects of the bicker.

Bide, wait.

Bide a wee, wait a short time.

Biggen, building.

Birkie, a lively young man.

Birsling his shins, warming his shins.

Blate, bashful.

Blethers, nonsense.

Blink o' favour, a gleam of favour.

Bodie, an oddish person.

Bodle, a copper coin, value the third part of an English penny.

Bolls (pronounced *bows*), dry measures, such as firlots, pecks, lippies, stempints, &c.

Bonny, bonnie, beautiful, comely.

Book-lear, book-learning.

Bowet, a lantern.

Bowly-legs, crooked legs.

Brae, hill.

Braw, er, est, fine, er, est, handsome.

Brawley, very well.

Breeks, breeches.

Brigg, bridge.

Browst, brewing.

Broo, I hae nae, I have no good opinion.

Buckie, a refractory noisy person. Buckie is a shell of spiral form, which, held to the ear, seems to have a continual sound within.

Buirdly, broad shouldered, athletic.

Bye, past.

But and ben, the outer and inner rooms of a house.

C.

Callant, a lad, a stripling.

Camstairie, froward, unmanageable.

Cankery, cross.

Canny, wary; *no canny*, means not safe, in a superstitious sense.

Cantie, cheerful.

Cap, a wooden bowl for holding liquor.

Cardinal, a long cloak, or mantle.

Carle, an old man.

Carlin, an old woman.

Causey, street.

Caution, security.

Chamer, chamber.

Chap, *chappie*, a smart fellow, and a little smart fellow.

Chap aff, chop off.

Chappit, knocked.

Chappin, a quart; and a *chappin stoup* is a quart pot.

Chield, a fellow.

Childer, children.

Clavering, gossiping, idle talking.

Claes, clothes.

Clash o' mire, handful of mud.

Clash, tittle tattle, the nine days wonder of a village.

Cleck, to hatch.

Clishmaclaver, idle discourse, silly talk.

Clootie, Nick the devil.

Closs, a passage, or entry between two houses.

Cockernonie, a twisted knot of hair worn by females.

Coffer kist, chest or trunk, a strong box.

Coft, bought, purchased.

Cooke, a sly look, or peep.

Coots, ancles.

Cosey, snug, warm.

Court to, to woo.

Couthy, affable, familiar, affectionate.

Cow, intimidate.

Cow a', beats all. *Cow's a'*, cuts out all, an expression of wonder.

Crack, chat, conversation.

Crappit heads, a particular mode of dressing haddocks with oatmeal.

Creel, a basket.

Crockit, lame.

Croozie, lamp.

D.

Daft, foolish, wanton, gay.

Dauner, wander.

Dauntoner, daunter.

Daur, dare.

Deevil, *Deil*, Old Nick, Nick the Devil, the polymorph king of the lower regions. For description see *Paradise Lost*, by John Milton, and *Satan*, a poem, by Robert Montgomery.

Deevil's buckie, a perverse, or refractory person.

Deil-be-licket, nothing.

Deg, a blow with a sharp pointed instrument,

Demented, deranged, insane.

Derning, concealing, hiding.

Dieted, ate.

Dight, wipe.

Disjasket, dejectedly, dishevelled.

Dochter, daughter.

Dodge, to jog, to follow, to watch any one.

Doited, stupid.

Dominie, a pedagogue.

Doo, a pigeon.

Douce, sedate, gentle, mild.

Dour, *dure*, obstinate, stern, severe,

Drap, *drappie*, drop, a small drop.

Dule, grief; *to thole the dule*, is to suffer the grief.

Dunkle, a hollow.

Dwamed, swooned.

E.

Ee, eye.

“ And maun I still on Menie doat,
And bear the scorn that 's in her ee.”

Eerie, superstitious timidity.

Eggit, instigated.

Eild, old, aged.

Elsin, awl.

Embros, Edinburgh; the Scotch generally pronounce it so.

Ends and awls, pack up your, an expression used for informing a person that his absence would be good company.

Erles, a piece of money given for confirming a bargain.

Exhoust, exhausted.

Eydant, diligent.

Eyne, eyes.

Ewie, ewe, a female sheep.

F.

Fairings, present given at fairs.

Farrant, auld farrent, sagacious.

Fash, trouble.

Faurt; *weel faurt* is good-looking, and *ill faurt* the contrary.

Firlots, voce bolls.

Flaught, a flake.

Flechtering, fluttering.

Flunky, a man-servant.

Foray, military inroad.

Forefoughten, tired.

Foregather, to meet accidentally.

Forenent, opposite.

Frae, from.

Fule, fool.

Furthy, frank, affable.

Fye gae rin and fye gae ride, make haste, run and ride.

G.

Gaberlunzie, a beggar man.

Gaen, gone.

Galliard, a gay dissipated person.

Gang, go

Gaun, going.

Gar, make.

Gardevine, a square bottle.

Gash, shrewd, sagacious.

Genty, neat, elegant.

Get out o' the gait, get out of the way.

Gie, giet, give, give it.

Gin, if.

Girn, a grin, a snare also of any kind.

Girt, thick,

Glaiket, giddy, foolish.

Glamour, a charm which the Scotch suppose can be thrown on the eye, causing it to see objects differently from what they are.

Gleg, quick, keen, clever, expeditious.

Gley'd, squint-eyed, oblique in general use.

Glint, a flash.

Gloaming, twilight.

Glowring, staring.

Gowden, golden.

Grange, farm-buildings.

Greenin, longing-green and melancholy.

Greeting, crying.

Gruesome, frightful, grim.

Guisart, morice-dancer.

Guising, masking.

Gumption, understanding.

H.

Ha, hall.

Haddie, a rizard, a dried haddock.

Hae, have.

Haena, have not.

Haffit, the side of the head.

Haggis, one of the six national dishes of Scotland.

Haggil aff, chopped off.

Hagglet, mangled.

Haimsucken, the technical name in Scotch law, for the crime of assaulting or beating a person in his own house; derived from *haim*, home, and *socken*, to seek, or pursue.

Handling, doings.

Havers, foolish, or nonsensical talk.

Hech, the act of breathing hard, or panting ; used as an expression of wonder.

Heft, handle of a knife or dagger.

Hempy, hempie, a rogue, a tricky wag, one to whom the adage might be applied, "the hemp's growing that will hang you."

Hern pan, scull.

Het, hot,

Hoast, cough.

Hobbleshaw, hubbub, tumult.

Honesty, an, a thing to do honour.

Horn, put to the horn, a Scotch law expression. A horning is a writ running in the King's name, on which a defendant is charged to make payment of his debt ; failing payment, in ancient practice, a messenger at arms, an officer belonging to the herald court, went to the cross of Edinburgh, and having "winded his horn" thrice, declared the defendant a rebel for having disobeyed the King's order to pay the debt, and thereupon a writ of imprisonment was issued. A writ of imprisonment still proceeds upon this fiction, but the messengers do not now a days actually perform their sounding functions, they, however, return a certificate that they have done so.

Hout, tout, tut, tut.

Houf, haunt.

I. J.

Jalouse, suspect.

Jenny-wi'-the-mony-feet, centipede. Extract from the speech of Lord P——t, in delivering his opinion on the case, *Cunningham v. Russel*, to be reported. *Fac. Coll.* vol. 1296, p. 345 : “ It should be observed, my Lords, that what is called a beetle is a reptile well known in this country. I have seen mony a ane o’ them on Drumsherlin muir. It’s a wee black beastie, about the size o’ my thumb-nail. The country people ca’ them *clocks*, and I believe they ca’ them also *jenny-wi'-the-mony-feet*.

Jiffey, a moment.

Jim and genty, neat, slender, elegantly formed.

Ilk, each, every, the same.

Inkling, hint.

Intil, into.

Jooked, an evasive motion, deceitful acting, shrinked, to bend the body to evade a blow, tricked.

Ise, I shall, I am.

Isna, is not.

Just, a Scotch reason ; because it is fit and reasonable.

K.

Kail, soup with vegetables in it.

Kain, small duty paid to a landlord in the shape of fowls, cheese, &c.

Keeking, peeping.

Keelevying, flirting.

Kep, stop, gather,

Ken, kent, know, known.

Kenawhat, know not what, a term of disrespect.

Killfuddoching, much ado about nothing.

Kilt, a Highlandman's breeks, or rather petticoats.

Kimmer, female neighbour.

Kipper, kippered saumon, salmon cured with pepper and salt, and dried.

Kirk, church.

Kirk and mill, to say "Make a kirk and a mill of any thing," is an expression of contempt.

Kist, chest.

Kitchen, any thing eaten with bread.

Kith and kin, relations.

Kittle, ticklish, difficult.

Kyte, belly, stomach.

Kythe, shew, manifest, produce.

L.

Laddie, lad.

Laird, a country gentleman, generally applied to those under the degree of knights.

Lang-nebbit, having a long nose; *lang nebbit words*, means such as are learned and recondite.

Latherons, wanton ladies.

Lee, lie.

Leddy, lady, or rather gentlewoman.

Leg bail, running off instead of finding bail to answer an offence.

Leil, true, loyal, upright, honest.

Let wot, make known.

Lilt, a cheerful song.

Link and gallant, to walk arm-in-arm and beau the ladies.

Links o' Leith; links as here used means the sandy ground lying among the windings of the water of Leith, between that place and Edinburgh.

Lippy, voce *bolts*.

Lith, joint.

Lodovie, brandy.

Loof, palm of the hand.

Loon, cunning person.

Loup, to leap.

Lucky, a designation given to an elderly woman, and also to the mistress of an alehouse.

Lug, ear.

M.

Mail, rent in whatever way paid for a farm or house.

Mair, more.

Maist, most.

Marrow, an associate, one of a pair.

Maun, must.

Maunna, must not.

Megsty, an interjection.

Meikle, much.

Mell, to, to mix.

Menseless, a person without manners.

Merk, a Scotch silver coin of the value of 1s. 1 $\frac{3}{4}$ d.
sterling,

Messenger at arms, voce *Horning*.

Mess John, Mass John, a familiar designation for a
clergyman.

Messin, a dog, a cur.

Millinder, milliner.

Minimumest, smallest.

Mirk, dark.

Misleart, unmannerly, mischievous.

Morn, the, to-morrow.

Muckle, big, great.

N.

Na, no.

Nae, none.

Narrow, miserly.

Neb, nose, beak.

Needcessities, necessities.

Ne'er-do-weel, a never-do-well.

Neive, a clenched fist.

Ncuk, nook.

O.

Outstraplous, obstreperous.

Owlet, an owl.

P.

Painchey, paunchy.

Palmy, a stroke, or blow on the palm of the hand.

Pannel, the name of a prisoner when placed at the bar.

Parten, a crab.

Pawkie, sly, artful, cunning, shrewd.

Peck, voce *bolts*.

Pendicle, attached; generally applied to a small piece of ground attached to a greater piece.

Peremptors, from peremptory.

Pingle, strive, toil eagerly and narrowly.

Place, the, the manor-house on an estate.

Plack, a small copper coin, value one-third of an English penny.

Plottie, a plot.

Pock neuk, the bottom corner of a bag.

Pree, taste.

Precognition, a law phrase, the first step in a criminal matter. The culprit and all the parties who know any thing of the offence, are examined, and this examination is used in framing the indictment.

Prejinct, precise.

Prent, print.

Provost, the Mayor of a Royal Burgh.

Puddocks, frogs.

Puir, poor.

R.

- Rade*, rode, applied to the riding on horseback.
Raid, an inroad.
Rampageous, riotous violent.
Randy, a scold.
Ranting, jovial.
Redde ye, counsel ye.
Reested, arrested.
Reestment, arrestment.
Remeid, remedy.
Ringin, or *ringen*, reinging.
Royster,
Ruff, to, to roll a drum, to applaud by hand and heel.
Rug, a rough or hasty pull.
Rung, a staff, (*shillela*, Hiber.).

S.

- Saft*, soft.
Sair, sore.
Samen, same.
Scart, scratch.
Scog or Scoug, to hide, to shelter, screen, protect, defend.
Scouter, singe, a species of polypus.
Servit, a table napkin, a towel.
Servitor, a servant.
Shacle bane, the wrist, the bone that is shackled.
Shave, a slice.
Shears, scissors.

Shins, ancles.

Shouthers, shoulders.

Sib, related by blood.

Sic, such.

Siller, silver, money in general.

Sherra, sheriff.

Skelp, a stroke or blow.

Skreigh, a shriek.

Skreigh o' day, the dawn.

Skirlie pan, a preparation of hot ale.

Sma', small.

Smeddum, spirit, mettle, quickness of apprehension.

Sueck, latch.

Sueckdrawer, cunning; a person who would silyly pull the latch.

Sorners, *sorning*, sturdy beggars, in the shape of friends and dependants, who quarter themselves *ad. lib.*; *sorning*, in its most extended sense, is defined in the Scotch law-books "to be the taking of meat and drink by force without paying for it."

Speer, ask, inquire.

Sponsibie, admissible as a surety.

Spring, a quick and cheerful tune on an instrument,

" 'Come, gie's a spring !' the lady cried."

Soutier, solder.

Stakwart, stalworth, brave, stout, strong.

Staple, part of the fastening of a door.

Steg-brae, a steep hill.

Steadin' a farm, houses belonging to a farm.

Steek, shut.

Stots, oxen.

Stoup, a pot or flaggon.

Stour, dust.

Southerief, in the Scotch law this means theft attended with violence.

Straemash, disturbance, broil.

Summer-and-winter, *to*, to dilly-dally.

Swankie, a young fellow, or an active and clever one, a blood.

Swatches, patterns, specimens.

Sybow, onion.

Syne, afterwards, then, time past, late.

T.

Tae, toe.

Tappit-hen, a pint pot measure, literally a crested hen.

Tass, a cup.

“Come gie me a pint o’ wine,
And fill it in a siller tassie.”

Tellt, told.

Tether, halter.

Thae, these.

Thegither, together.

Thocht, thought.

Thole, to bear, suffer.

Thrang, throng, engaged.

Thrapple, throat.

Thraw the key, turn the key.



Tirl, to, to touch slightly, so as to produce a faint sound.

Tirl at the pin, turning the pin by which cottage doors were fastened.

Tocher, tochered, dowry, having a tocher.

Tod, tod-lowry, a fox.

Toom-handed, empty-handed.

Tot, all, whole.

Tousy, rough, shaggy, dishevelled, disordered.

Tousle, rough dalliance, rumple, and handle roughly.

Tow, a rope, a halter.

Trance, a passage within a house, and trance-door is the door to the passage.

Trow, to, to believe, to make believe in sport.

Turn, to do a, to perform a piece of work.

Twal, twelve.

U. V.

Virle or virle, a ring on the end or point of anything to keep it firm.

Umquhile, sometime, formerly.

Uncanny, dangerous, not safe, applied also to a person supposed to possess preternatural powers.

Unco, unknown, strange, unusual, surprising, very.

W.

Wa', wall; and the expression, "when a man's back 's to the wa'."

Wae, woe.

Waling, choosing, selecting.

Wally-wally, expression of lamentation, from *wa*,
woe, and *la*, oh!

“ Wally-wally, up yon bank,
And wally-wally down yon burn.”

Wan weel thro', got well on.

Waur, worse

Waurt, spent.

Wee, little.

Weel, well.

Weel faurt, good-looking.

Weel I wot, well I know.

Wha, who.

Whar, where.

Whilk, which.

Whisht, or *Wheesht*, hush, be silent.

Whorl, the fly of a distaff, sometimes of wood, some-
times of stone.

Whudding, whisking, moving away quickly.

Wi', with.

Wily, cunning, enticing.

Winna', will not.

Winsome, gay, merry, comely, agreeable.

Wiseing, —

Worricow, a scarecrow, a bugbear.

Wraith, an apparition.

Wud, mad, insane.

Wuddy, the gallows tree.

Wull, will.

Wull-cat, wild-cat; and to tumble the wull-cat means to whirl heels over head, or "heels o'er gowdy," a sommerset.

Wyliccoat, an under petticoat.

Wynd, an alley or lane.

Wyte, blame.

Y.

Ye'll, you will.

Ye're, you are.

Yerl, Earl.

Yestreen, yesternight.

Yett, gate.

Yill, ale.

Yoner, yonder.

THE END.



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